Habitat Debate

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The United Nations Centre for Human Settlements

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ISTANBUL + 1

Monitoring Progress on Implementation of the Habitat Agenda One Year After Habitat II

The rapid growth of populations and their concentration in cities constitute a crucial element affecting the future of humanity. Despite four millennia as centres of civilization and economic activity, cities never attracted more than ten percent of the global population until the 19th century. In the second half of the 20th century, systems of cities have become the centrepiece of the worlds social, economic, cultural and political matrix.

In 1970, 35 per cent of the world's population lived in urban areas. By the year 2000, that percentage will reach nearly 50 percent. During the period 1990-2030, the urban population will grow by about 3.3 billion, over 90 percent of which will accrue to cities of developing countries. Cities have become synonymous with growth, but as a consequence they are also increasingly subject to dramatic crises, especially in developing countries. Poverty, environmental degradation, lack of urban services, deficiencies in existing infrastructure, and lack of access to land and adequate shelter are among the main areas of concern in an urbanizing world.

For better, and hopefully not for worse, the development of contemporary society in almost every country will depend largely on managing the growth of cities; the city will increasingly become the testing ground for the adequacy of political institutions, for the performance of government agencies, and for the effectiveness of programmes to combat environmental degradation, to overcome social exclusion and to promote economic development.

Despite the strong positive correlation between urbanization and social and economic development, the human settlements "sector" has not been a priority in many countries. One of the main purposes of the Habitat II

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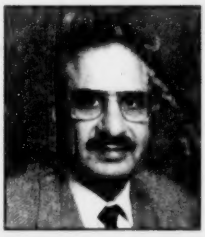
EDITORIAL



The Habitat Agenda, the global plan of action adopted by the world's Governments at the Habitat II Conference in Istanbul last year, sets out approaches and strategies towards the achievement of sustainable development of the world's urban areas over the next 20 years. With the adoption of the Agenda, the international community ratified the twin principles of enablement and participation, laying strong emphasis on gender equality, the need for additional financing of shelter and human settlements development, as well as the importance of international cooperation.

The Habitat Agenda had been under broad-based discussion for two years before it was adopted on 14 June 1996. UNCHS (Habitat) has been intimately involved in this process as it was not only the secretariat for the Habitat II Conference, but had the responsibility of encouraging the formation of broad-based National Committees and the preparation of National Reports and National Plans of Action. National Reports and National Plans of Action constituted one of the main contributions of countries to the Habitat II process. The response was overwhelmingly positive: Five-year National Plans of Action were prepared and submitted to the Conference by 129 countries; most were prepared involving a large spectrum of actors grouped together in national preparatory committees or coordinating bodies. As part of the consultative process, many workshops, seminars and meetings took place worldwide at the local, national, sub-regional and regional levels. Many of the National Reports reflect the diversity and richness of these consultations.

At the national and local levels, the main follow-up activity to Habitat II is monitoring of the implementation of the Habitat Agenda and National and Local Plans of Action. In this issue of *Habitat Debate*, we present a regional perspective on implementing activities around the world and case studies of successful examples. We also present the views of various partners on what they perceive to be their own role in the implementation process and what they expect from Governments and the United Nations itself.

I am proud to say that UNCHS (Habitat), focal point for monitoring the implementation of the Habitat Agenda, has now put in place a Global Urban Observatory (GUO), which will serve as the main monitoring facility at the Centre. The GUO has been created to provide, analyse and evaluate information on human settlements conditions worldwide. It combines the activities of Habitat's two main monitoring facilities: the Urban Indicators Programme and the Best Practices and Local Leadership Programme (BLP). The main objective of the GUO is to help national Governments and local authorities and their partners increase their knowledge of human settlements conditions and solutions and thus improve their capacity to formulate and adopt appropriate policies.

Habitat is also working closely with its partners to prepare a set of draft guides for implementing and mon-itoring the Habitat Agenda. The guides should not only promote partnerships in the implementation of the Habitat Agenda, but should also help raise sustainable human settlements development to a priority concern in overall national policy setting and resource allocation. It is my sincere hope that all these activities will come to fruition.

Darshan Johal
Assistant Secretary-General and
Acting Executive Director, UNCHS (Habitat)

Best copy available

LETTERS

SEVANATHA, a grassroot level NGO working with urban poor communities in Sri Lanka greatly appreciates the contents of *Habitat Debate*. We are trying to promote partnership among CBOs, NGOs and local authorities in implementation of projects in low-income urban settlements. The articles in this bulletin provide useful guidance for our work.

H.M.U. Chularathna
SEVANATHA Urban Resource Centre
Rajagiriya, Sri Lanka

The article entitled "NGOs and the Media: Symbiosis or Subservience", by Darryl D'Monte (*Habitat Debate*, Vol. 3 No.1, March 1997) reminds me of the Silent Valley dam project controversy some years back. The project in Kerala, India, could not be carried out owing to protests by environmentalists. Efforts to achieve rapid economic growth and development would have had negative effects on the environment. Development projects, if poorly planned, can definitely be environmentally destructive. Conservation of the environment is the need of the hour. Activists in their efforts to create public awareness about the dangers of environmental degradation may indulge in a certain degree of exaggeration which might be condoned.

In the column entitled "Partners Update", it was quite heartening to read about the items which the participants had recommended for special attention in the Work Programme. The point on promoting the use of environment-friendly building materials especially brings to mind the fact that houses built in the traditional style were better suited to local needs and more pleasing to the eye than the modern concrete and glass contraptions.

Our organization, the United Schools Organization of India (USO — the national affiliate of United Schools International), is promoting environmental awareness among school children in India by conducting country-wide essay competitions on vehicular pollution, the bane of the modern city. Even in the past, USO had conducted essay competitions on environmental awareness for children. USO also seeks to educate children about the UN, its ideals and activities through its publications.

Padma Mohan Kumar
United Schools International
New Delhi, India

I would like to express our appreciation of the quality of your publications, particularly the 1996 *Global Report on Human Settlements and Habitat Debate*. It is our conviction that it is only through dialogue and communication that viable solutions involving the people can be found to address the serious problems confronting the cities of the world, particularly in the developing countries.

Daudi N. Mwakawago
Ambassador
The United Republic of Tanzania
Permanent Mission to the United Nations
New York, U.S.A.

I look forward to receiving copies of *Habitat Debate*, *Indicators Newsletter* and other UNCHS publications since I find most of the articles in them relevant and appropriate to the Philippine situation on housing and poverty.

What interests me in particular is the secretariat work UNCHS has been doing to follow-up the implementation of the Habitat Agenda. This will help us significantly in identifying an appropriate mechanism in monitoring the implementation of resolutions made during the 1995 Housing Summit and 1996 National Shelter Conference by the different sectors involved in the Philippine Shelter Programme.

We find that Philippine problems on housing, poverty and environment degradation are escalating despite sound theoretical and technological expertise. The problem lies in the poor execution of programmes, the implementation of unsound policies and the sustenance of worthwhile strategies and approaches now endangered by the coming change in national leadership. It is therefore critical that UNCHS focus on our country which does not enjoy the same attention as other nations in Asia and the Pacific.

The United Nations and the international sector have better chances of influencing our leaders to pursue the commitments and promises they made at the Habitat Conference in Istanbul.

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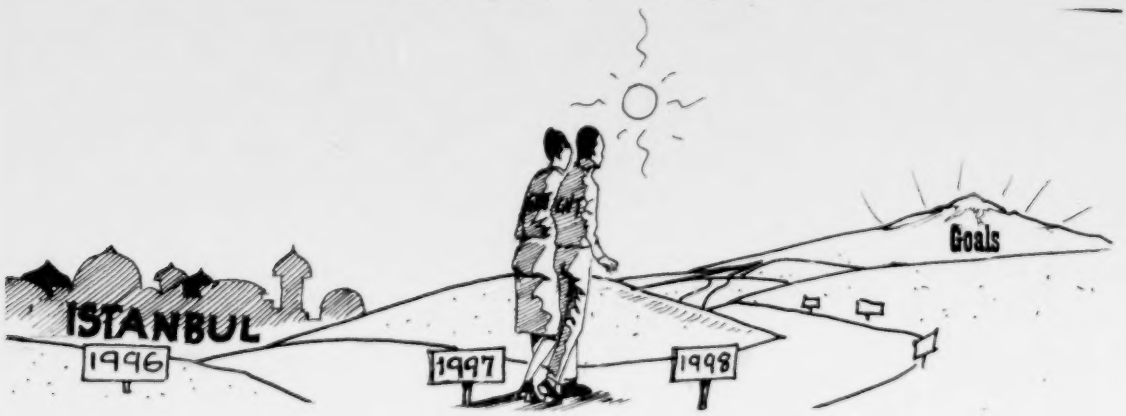
We welcome your contributions.



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Conference was to raise awareness among national policy-makers that the city, in fact, adds value to the national social and economic product which exceeds the percentage of the urban population.

The Habitat Agenda

The main message drawn from the Habitat Agenda — the main political document resulting from the Habitat II Conference — is that the vast array of human development problems may best find its resolution through the components of open and accountable governance: civic engagement, popular participation, solidarity and partnership; public spirited leadership; the generation, transfer and application of knowledge; and the mobilization and efficient management of available resources at all levels. Any strategy to improve people's lives and living environments — including any strategy adopted by the United Nations in providing support to Member States — must aim at creating a strong and open framework of human settlements governance.

The Habitat Agenda is unambiguous in asserting that national and local levels of government have the primary responsibility for developing and implementing human settlements policies. Implementation strategies firmly established within the Habitat Agenda emphasize creation of partnerships, adoption of enabling approaches, implementation of participatory planning and management, building of capacity among all partner groups and monitoring and assessment of progress through networking and the application of modern information technologies.

National Plans of Action

At Istanbul, Member States committed themselves to implementing the Habitat Agenda through local, national, sub-regional and regional plans of action. Five-year national plans of action (NPAs) were prepared and submitted to the Conference by 129 countries. Most plans also outline priorities for international technical cooperation.

By collecting urban and shelter indicators and other information and by identifying best practices in improving the living environment, countries were able to start the process of self-assessment, producing baseline information on human settlements conditions and trends and establishing priorities for action. By the time of the Istanbul Conference, 221 cities around the world had collected a basic set of 46 key indicators and over 700 local initiatives had been nominated as best practices.

In most of the countries that produced NPAs, broad-based national committees were set up to guide the reporting and planning processes. They included representatives of local authorities, the private sector, NGOs and other partners. These Habitat Committees should be retained and strengthened where they have already been established and should be created or re-established in countries where they do not, or no longer, exist. Their functions should be to review human settlements conditions and trends, advise the Government on national housing and urban policy development and ensure that the strategic objectives outlined in the NPA are incorporated into national policy formulation and implementation processes. National Habitat Committees should also be given responsibility for coordinating at the national level the monitoring of progress in the implementation of national plans of action and for helping to guide international cooperation programmes. Where national plans have already been adopted, National Habitat Committees should work to update them on a regular basis. Where there are no plans, the committees should initiate and facilitate their formulation.

Local Plans of Action

Over time, as local follow-up activities are organized, NPAs should become more responsive to local priorities, including local Agendas 21. To ensure national consistency and integrity, national and provincial governments, working with local authorities and partners groups, should be encouraged to formulate detailed specifications for the development of local plans of action (LPAs) and local monitoring of human settlements. As prepared by UNCHS (Habitat) in collaboration with the World Assembly of Cities and Local Authorities Coordination (WACLAC), guidelines for LPAs are particularly attentive to, and inclusive of, the strategic objectives of partnership, enablement, participation, capacity-building and networking. Broad-based consultations, capacity evaluations, open communication systems, development review processes, demonstration projects and pilot programmes can be fruitfully developed at both national and local levels. As at the national level, local planning processes should rely on the use of

National Reports and National Plans of Action

	National Reports		National Plans of Action	
REGION	Countries submitting NRs	Percentage of all countries (%)	National reports with NPAs	Percentage of all NRs (%)
Africa	50	94	47	94
Asia/Pacific	27	63	24	88
Central/East Europe	21	80	19	90
Latin America/Caribbean	21	63	21	100
Industrialized countries	20	65	18	90
Total	139		129	

Source: UNCHS (Habitat)

indicators and the identification of best practices for analyzing trends and conditions and for monitoring progress. LPA guidelines may be adopted by local authorities voluntarily or they may take the form of mandatory enabling legislation, depending upon the context.

Partners Plans of Action

Acting to implement the Habitat Agenda's strategic objectives, governments and local authorities should be encouraged to collaborate directly with partner groups in the development of NPAs and LPAs. Partners (including NGOs and the private sector) may also wish to formulate their own five-year plans of action to implement the Habitat Agenda. While partners should be encouraged to participate in collaborative multi-partner formulation and implementation of action plans at the local level, provision should be made at all levels for implementation of specific activities by any group. Accordingly, monitoring of progress on their own Habitat II follow-up initiatives by partners is to be encouraged. Here, again, indicators and best practices should be employed to establish a baseline and continuous flow of information on conditions and trends as well as on impacts of human settlements policy.

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Human Settlements Reviews: Setting Priorities for National Action

At the national level, the main follow-up activity to Habitat II will be the implementation and further development of the National Plans of Action. National plans will address the issues of human settlements development by involving the full participation of all relevant actors in the assessment of current conditions and trends and in the identification of priority areas for urban policy. A Human Settlements Review is a major instrument for achieving these goals.

What is a Human Settlements Review?

A national Human Settlements Review is a systematic analysis of conditions and trends in cities and towns throughout a country. It provides the empirical foundation — the baseline of information — for national urban policies and programmes and, consequently, it may also be the basis for the sustainable urban development chapter of the Country Strategy Note and the UN Development Assistance Framework. It should be conducted on a periodic basis, prior to the beginning of each national planning and budgeting cycle.

What are its functions?

Among other things, the national Human Settlements Review will quantify demographic changes, disaggregated by gender (and paying particular attention to vulnerable groups), and the prospective adequacy of shelter, infrastructure, land and finance, transportation, social services, and the institutional framework for urban management. The national Human Settlements Review will measure and report on the need to build institutional capacity for improving public sector enabling functions at all levels. By employing an established system of housing and urban indicators, succeeding Reviews will monitor conditions and trends over time. To help identify effective urban development policies, the Human Settlements Review will also seek out and report on successful projects, programmes and best practices, implemented at all levels, which have resulted in the steady improvement of living conditions in human settlements.

Who does the national review?

A national Human Settlements Review should be commissioned by the national Government as the first step in a periodic national development planning process. Governments are encouraged to delegate this responsibility to their National Habitat Committees, the broad-based task forces established to assess urban policy and draft the Habitat II national plans of action. The technical work of data collection and analysis may be carried out by an entity designated as the National Urban Observatory, serving as secretariat to the National Habitat Committee. Prior to the formulation or revision of the Country Strategy Note, the National Urban Observatory may request expertise or other assistance available through the technical cooperation programmes of the United Nations System. UNCHS (Habitat) is the United Nations agency with the mandate and expertise to support multi-sectoral reviews of human settlements conditions and trends in collaboration with other relevant agencies.

Guides for Action

A process of monitoring and evaluation has been set in motion by UNCHS (Habitat) through a system of implementation guides, which were developed in cooperation with partner groups. The guides provide a menu of suggested Habitat II follow-up activities and a coherent monitoring framework for each major group of partners. The system of guides include:

(a) A general guide for all partners

(b) Guid0es set to each major group of partners:
- Guide for Local Authorities
- Guide for Parliamentarians
- Guide for Civil Society
- Guide for the Private Sector
- Guide for UN Resident Coordinator System

(c) Guides and worksheets for monitoring and evaluation
- Urban Indicators
- Best Practices

(d) Habitat Online Partnership Plan of Action

These guides can be found on the World Wide Web site: <http://www.unhabitat.org/partners/index.html>.

For more information on Guides for the implementation of the Habitat Agenda, please contact:
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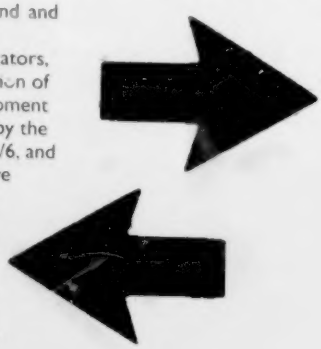
Using Urban Indicators to Monitor the Habitat Agenda

by Christine Auclair

Indicators are measures that summarize quantitative information about a particular geographic area. They are also measures wh point to particular problems, enabling decision- and policy-makers to respond to specific needs and questions. Indicators can as in analysing trends and in systematically reviewing the impact of policies. They are, therefore, powerful tools for clarifying issues a formulating decisions related to development planning. The usefulness of indicators has been widely acknowledged by the internatio community which at the Habitat II Conference in Istanbul recommended that indicators be used for monitoring the implementation the Habitat Agenda.

The new *Guide for Monitoring Human Settlements with Urban Indicators*, designed by the UNCHS (Habitat) Urban Indicators Progr me, comes in response to this recommendation, providing fresh direction in the spirit of the post-Istanbul era. The main emphasis this Guide is that the impact, usefulness and responsiveness of indicators increase with their adaptability to policy and to stakeholde needs. It also states that indicators should be determined through a broad-based partnership approach including all levels decision-makers and stakeholders involved in urban development issues.

Part I of this Guide is an overview of the Urban Indicators Programme, its background and rationale, and it presents the strategy for the second phase of the programme (1997 - 2001).



Part II, entitled The *Abridged Survey*, which contains a set of key urban and housing indicators, constitutes a monitoring package for cities. It should be used as a tool for reviewing the condition of cities, and for providing benchmarks for the improvement of urban conditions and the development of urban policies. *The Abridged Survey* contains a series of key indicators which were endorsed by the fifteenth session of the Commission on Human Settlements in May 1995, in its resolution 15/6, and were collected by 220 cities before June 1996. The indicators collected before January 1997 have been analyzed and have provided important comparative results on human settlements conditions worldwide.

Part III, entitled *Going Beyond*, provides guidelines for advanced work on indicators development and application at different operational levels. While the key indicators contained in the *Abridged Survey* provide a quick overview of urban conditions and trends, it is important to develop different ways of adapting the indicators system to specific uses and contexts. This chapter suggests new directions for extending and consolidating the integration and application of indicators at all levels of decision-making. Among these are:

- the implementation of broad-based participatory processes for defining indicators tailored to the needs of cities and communitie within cities;
- the definition of indicator frameworks tailored to specific national and local needs;
- a set of new indicators designed through participatory approaches and broad-based consensus;
- the institutionalization of participatory processes into National and Local Urban Observatories;
- the use of the Global Urban Observatory network;
- the adaptation of new tools for managing indicators data and maximizing their application at all levels of urban development activities; and
- the inclusion of indicators in existing projects.

The Guide for Monitoring Human Settlements with Urban Indicators may be downloaded from the Urban Indicators Programm website at:
http://www.unhabitat.org/indicators/ or a diskette containing the Guide may be ordered directly from the Urban Indicator Programme, c/o UNCHS (Habitat), P.O.Box 30030, Nairobi, Kenya. Tel: (2542) 623184, Fax: (2542) 624263/4.

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The Global Urban Observatory

Objectives: The Global Urban Observatory (GUO) has been created to provide, analyse and evaluate information on human settlements' conditions worldwide. It combines the activities of Habitat's two main monitoring facilities: the Urban Indicators Programme (UIP) and the Best Practices and Local Leadership Programmes (BLP). The objective of GUO is to help Governments and local authorities improve their knowledge of human settlements' conditions and their capacity to formulate and adopt appropriate policies.

Programmes involved: Through the Best Practices Programme, local solutions in improving living environments are collected, evaluated and disseminated globally. Through the Urban Indicators Programme, indicators to monitor urban progress are applied locally and compared globally. Information and data from both programmes are collected in the Best Practices and Urban Indicators Databases. This information provides a global knowledge infrastructure from which effective policy options may be derived to help implement the Habitat Agenda.

Strategy: GUO works through an international network of regional and national partners. These institutions are dedicated to providing local training in appropriate data-collection methods and in the development, adoption and maintenance of reliable information systems. They will be responsible for introducing quantitative and qualitative analytical methodologies appropriate to the local levels of expertise. By working closely with regional, national and local partners, GUO can assist policy-makers and policy analysts in interpreting indicators and best practice information. This information will assist in understanding how urban areas work and how urbanization may be better managed.

Measuring Success: The impact of GUO will be measured by the progressive institutionalization of processes to incorporate objective information and quantitative measures into urban policy development. The utility of indicators, best practices and other information as policy inputs will be closely monitored and feedback from local policy-makers and policy-analysts will be used to adjust data sets, collection methods and analysis techniques.

For more information on the GUO, please contact:
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The GUO newsletter, The Urban Observer, will be on the World Wide Web soon.

Addressing the Gender Gap in National Plans of Action

The Habitat Agenda clearly has a gender perspective, thanks to the serious lobbying and networking efforts of the Huairou Commission, before and during the Habitat II Conference. National Plans of Action, on the other hand, vary from country to country depending on political commitment, the level of awareness, and the extent of women's networking in any given country. Moreover, the principles of gender equality and housing as a human right got into the Habitat Agenda only at the third substantive session of the Preparatory Committee for Habitat II (New York, February 1996) by which time many National Action Plans had been finalized. If national plans are the tools for implementation of the Habitat Agenda at the national level, then there is a need to address any possible gender gaps between national plans and the Habitat Agenda. Some countries are revising their national plans to bring them in line with the final version of the Habitat Agenda. This would be an opportune time for women in such countries to ensure that the gender perspective is reflected in national plans. In countries where this process is not taking place, gender gaps will have to be addressed at the implementation stage.

The Huairou Commission on Women and Habitat has among its objectives: to ensure that the Habitat Agenda is implemented with women in central decision-making roles and with sufficient resources to function effectively; and to highlight grassroots women's concerns and perspectives in the development of sustainable human settlements. (For more detailed description of the Huairou Commission, see *Habitat Debate*, Vol.3 No. 1, March 1997) The Huairou Commission does not as yet have members in every country but there are women's organisations and networks that could be active in monitoring the implementation of the Habitat Agenda from a gender perspective. The idea of "Report Cards" for grading governments' post-Habitat II action was first suggested in Istanbul. Already, the Huairou Commission is working on a common monitoring format. A draft is being discussed and by the end of the year, women's organizations will be monitoring implementation at home and exchanging information on how their governments are living up to their commitments from Istanbul.

However, this monitoring process does not have any sort of legal backing that can be used to hold governments accountable. It will

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therefore be effective only if the national lobby groups behind it are strong. The Huairou Commission can be an effective body for supporting the efforts of grassroots women to hold their governments accountable, and linking these efforts to the work of UNCHS (Habitat) vis-à-vis the implementation of the Habitat Agenda.

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Sample Questions from the Draft "Report Card"

REPORTING ON HABITAT II

What action (if any) has been taken to disseminate information at the following levels?

- National
- Central government bodies
- Local government and municipalities
- Non-governmental organizations
- Grassroots organizations
- Private sector
- Public opinion

How have women and gender concerns been represented?
Are NGOs knowledgeable about the Habitat Agenda?
Which ones? How are they using it?

FRAMEWORK FOR FOLLOW-UP

Has the Government adopted a five year plan?
What institutions, mechanisms or processes has the government designated to review and implement the Habitat Agenda?
Has the government initiated a process for collecting gender desegregated data?
What is the level of participation of women's groups in the decision-making process regarding follow-up and implementation of the Habitat Agenda at:

- Government — national and local levels
- National follow-up committees
- Local follow-up committees

Has the country established a post-Habitat committee?
What monitoring initiatives has the civil society — NGO's or community-based organizations (CBOs) — taken?

COMMITMENTS AND SPECIFIC NEW INITIATIVES

What specific policies, strategies, programmes or projects have been initiated to implement the Habitat Agenda?
Are programmes on housing or human settlements being developed which contribute to strengthening the gender perspective in:

- the government policies on housing or human settlements
- the process of gender sensitization among the government officials (policy makers)
- the process of capacity building and training on gender issues for NGOs, CBOs and grassroots groups for the sensitization of their leadership?

As stipulated in the Habitat Agenda, to what extent do women's groups have access to the necessary resources such as:

- access to credit
- the right to own land and property
- health care
- access to basic services such as water and sanitation.

RESOURCES

Are you aware of the resources/funding available to your government or any other institutions for the implementation of the Habitat Agenda initiatives and commitments? Are women's groups involved in the process of resources/funding allocation for the implementation of the Habitat Agenda?

VIEWPOINT

Watchdog or Wimp?

Han van Putten and Jay Moor exchange views on whether the United Nations can play an impartial and objective role in monitoring the implementation of the Habitat Agenda.

HvP: The Habitat Agenda adopted last year in Istanbul contains many good recommendations for housing and human settlements policies which, if carried out, would significantly improve the living conditions of millions of people.

Unfortunately, experience has taught that there is often a wide gap between the commitments and recommendations adopted by UN conferences, on the one hand, and their implementation on the other. Governments tend to easily forget the solemn promises they made at these meetings unless they are reminded of them through public opinion, NGOs, the media, parliaments etc.

The UN itself has no instruments to enforce conference decisions. One of the few ways through which it can put pressure on Member Governments is by asking them to report at regular intervals on the progress they are making in implementing conference recommendations.

However, Governments are reluctant to send in reports and, if they do, they only mention positive achievements; never shortcomings. The reports are usually uncritical and incomplete. The Habitat Agenda gives the UN Commission on Human Settlements a central role in the monitoring process; the UN Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat), as the secretariat of the Commission, is responsible for the preparatory work. As the Centre is at the service of UN Member Governments, it is not expected to be critical of them. It describes its own role as being limited to the "compilation and synthesis" of national reports.

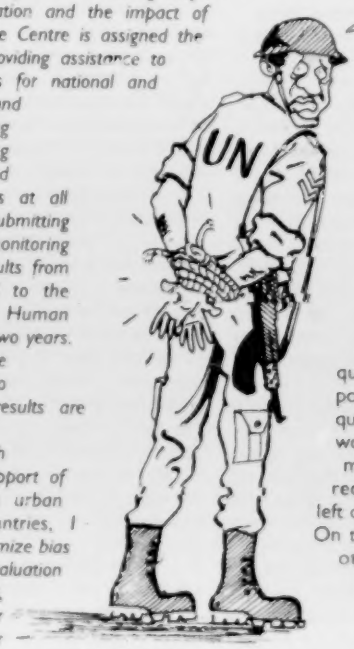
Reports produced in this way are usually submitted to the Commission under the signature of the Executive Director of the Centre or the Secretary-General of the UN. This implies that the UN is responsible for the final text and will take out any information which could displease particular Governments.

Some of the people who helped draft the Habitat Agenda were aware of the fact that this procedure hardly deserved to be called monitoring. Paragraph 238 of the Habitat Agenda states that: "The contribution of local authorities and civil society, including the private sector, to development can be enhanced by .... (d) supporting academic and research institutions .... and facilitating mechanisms for independent, detached, impartial and objective monitoring of human settlements progress."

The question arises whether this Paragraph provides enough of a basis for UNCHS (Habitat) to take on an impartial and objective role in monitoring the implementation of the Habitat Agenda.

JM: *The Habitat Agenda clearly decentralizes responsibility for monitoring and evaluation in paragraphs 239, 240 and 241. Habitat's role, working with other relevant organizations, is to establish an appropriate process for analyzing and monitoring major trends in urbanization and the impact of urban policies. The Centre is assigned the further task of providing assistance to establish guidelines for national and local monitoring and evaluation, focusing on strengthening data collection and analysis capabilities at all levels. We will be submitting a synthesis of all monitoring and evaluation results from around the world to the Commission on Human Settlements every two years. Our partners will be watching closely to ensure that the results are objective and fair.*

Through networking and support of open dialogue on urban issues within countries, I believe we can minimize bias in monitoring and evaluation at all levels. At least, through our guidelines for monitoring and evaluation, we are able to encourage transparency and accountability. As a reporter, UNCHS (Habitat)'s Global Urban Observatory will rely on many partners to ask the right questions, reveal contradictions, dig for facts, obtain all sides to a story and, in the end, provide national and regional syntheses of information. If the Commission on Human Settlements and our partners do not want us to employ this strategy of decentralized cooperation for participatory monitoring, they will eventually let us know. In the meantime, to remain objective and open, we intend to report the findings of partners groups, generated by their own monitoring and self-evaluation activities and submitted voluntarily to the Global Urban Observatory.



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HvP: The Commission on Human Settlements (CHS) has not been very clear about the collection of data on which to base the monitoring and evaluation. Resolution 16/1[1] of 7 May 1997 mentions in passing that Governments are expected to submit annual progress reports on the implementation of the Habitat Agenda. In Resolution 16/23 it is said that evaluations should take place every two years at every session of the Commission and that the Centre will analyse progress in 1998 and 2000.

It would no doubt be helpful if the national reports had a uniform structure. The Habitat Agenda contains 27 commitments (under 7 headings) and more than 600 recommendations. Few governments will be prepared to provide information on all these every two years (let alone every year). It is probably too late to decide that in 1999 the section on housing and in 2001 that on sustainable development will be on the Commission's agenda. An alternative would be to circulate a simplified questionnaire, containing, if possible, not more than 100 questions. In that case, one would have to accept that most of the more specific recommendations would be left out.

On the other hand, it helps that other organs of the UN, besides Habitat, are collecting data on subjects dealt within the Habitat Agenda, such as poverty (Commission on Social

Development), gender (Commission on the Status of Women), sustainability (Commission on Sustainable Development), water supply and sanitation (UNICEF, WHO, WMO, UNDP among others). It should be possible to come to an agreement on a division of tasks and to avoid duplication.

However, the data collected must be comparable. Since the first session of the Preparatory Committee for Habitat II in 1994, a great deal of attention has been paid to the need for comparable data in order to be able to measure progress. In the course of the years, 46 housing indicators were defined and a similar set of urban indicators are still under discussion. Governments have been asked to make use of indicators in their national reports.

Lately, the discussion has concentrated on the desirability of differentiating between indicators because of the different social and economic situations of countries and cities. Valuable as this may be, this exchange of views seems to distract from the need to agree on a uniform set of indicators in order to be able to compare situations and measure progress.

One of the problems is that several countries still lack the possibility to collect the necessary statistics. Training courses have started to help them. Another problem (common to all international statistics) is to fix uniform gauging-years.

Finally, monitoring the follow-up is a problem which, in various degrees, is common to all UN conferences. It is more than an administrative matter. It is about the credibility of the UN...and its members.

JM: *In the field of local development, I think we (Habitat) have already moved beyond the traditional lock-step reporting requirements that have been typical of the United Nations. If the UN's need to make data globally comparable is the main monitoring criterion, then we miss the more important opportunity to use the Habitat Agenda to improve directly the urban policy and management functions of national and local authorities.*

The Global Urban Observatory (GUO) does not intend to discard the 46 comparable indicators — they are still on top of the agenda. From such comparable indicators, we can create several very useful comparative indices, as the Phase One report of our Urban Indicators Programme illustrates. What we are also aiming for, however, is a way that the partner groups at various levels can add contextual indicators of their own to the list to better reflect local priorities. But this must be done in an objective and scientifically valid way. Therefore, the most important element of the Urban Indicators Programme, based on our experience in Phase One (1994 - 1996), is capacity-building for collection, management, analysis and application of indicators data. The GUO and Member States of the UN, in general, will profit very little if data are of questionable quality or if there is no connection between indicators data and policy-making processes.

The Urban Indicators Programme intends to request indicators data on a three-year cycle to begin with, so there is relatively current longitudinal information (1993, 1996, 1999) for the 2001 General Assembly review of progress in implementing the Habitat Agenda. Measurement of progress in all areas of the Habitat Agenda, however, will be uneven for a long time, and that is not bad. Urban development is uneven, globally. The main reasons for monitoring and evaluation are to identify current conditions and trends, to look for inequities and disparities in living conditions at each level and to seek out good practices in improving the situation.

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Certainly, global comparisons are useful in targeting multi- and bi-lateral assistance. But such international investment in urbanization around the world is still only a small fraction of the total urban investment, most of which is private and local. Unless we are interested in pointing fingers without being constructive, there is little reason for global comparison. More fruitful would be local comparisons with national or regional averages that can be used (1) as flags to indicate relatively good and poor performance within a country or region and (2) identification of examples of good governance that can serve as an inspiration and help set a higher standard.

The Global Urban Observatory is concerned with information and that contributes to the world's knowledge of cities. No other organization in the UN is focused solely on the performance of urban areas, where half the world's people now live. Where national statistics lack the disaggregation required to identify community conditions and trends, the Global Urban Observatory is supporting efforts to build this capacity at the local level. We are doing this by encouraging sustainable networks of designated local and national urban observatories that link capacity-building resources and participatory policy-making processes at all levels. One of the operating principles of the Global Urban Observatory is that there should be no monopoly granted to institutions in the monitoring and evaluation process. Learning works best in a completely open and inclusive environment at all levels.

To respond to the concern that the credibility of the UN is at stake, I agree completely. It is time to admit that neither we nor anyone else in the world know enough about urbanization. It is imperative that we invite partners into a multi-dimensioned dialogue based on objective information and on stories of successful governance that can illustrate new, higher standards and lead to a more operational understanding of how cities work. If monitoring and evaluation activities around the world can contribute to this learning process, there will be real progress in implementing the Habitat Agenda.

Han van Putten was Secretary of the NGO International Facilitating Group (IFG) for Habitat II.
Jay Moor is Coordinator of UNCHS Habitat)'s Global Urban Observatory (GUO).

The above article is based on postings on the Habitat II listserv <h2o-l@undp.org>

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What Civil Society Demands of Governments

by Daniel Galand

At the dawn of the 21st century, urban growth has reached a level where the sustainable development of human settlements and the enforcement of the right to housing have become necessities. All necessary tools to reach that goal, including discussion and negotiation with all concerned parties, have to be used. The great French scientist Lavoisier said, "nature hates a void". The void today is between civil society's demands and Governments' responsibilities.

For example, the right to housing has been affirmed and reaffirmed by governments as a human right which is indivisible, inter-dependent and inter-related. The right to housing is mentioned first in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) and then in the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (1966) ratified by 133 countries, which proclaims "the right of everyone to an adequate standard of living, for himself and his family, including adequate food, clothing and housing..."

The definition of the term "adequate housing" was clearly articulated by the UN Committee which is monitoring the application of the Covenant to comprise: security of tenure; availability of services, affordability; habitability; accessibility; location and cultural adequacy. These conditions have been confirmed in the Habitat Agenda — the global plan of action adopted by the world's Governments at the Habitat II Conference in Istanbul.

However, despite the evolution of the right to housing and the political commitments made by Governments, few countries have addressed the "how and when" of this right. Nonetheless, 129 governments manifested their goodwill by preparing National Plans of Action (NPAs) for the Istanbul Conference. The Habitat Agenda provides a detailed framework and precise guidelines for the progressive realization of the right to housing. Obviously, NPAs are both a report and intentions for the future, but the big question is whether there will be any follow-up nationally and internationally.

At the national level, the Habitat Agenda emphasizes that Governments have the primary responsibility for its implementation, and that they should create and strengthen effective partnerships with all groups in civil society.

At the international level, the Habitat Agenda gives the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat) a central and catalytic role in monitoring, promoting and facilitating the implementation of the Habitat Agenda (paragraphs 222, 222n and 228n).

However, one year after Istanbul, civil society has little information on how governments are fulfilling their responsibilities, if at all, on implementation of NPAs. Habitat Plus, a non-governmental organization (NGO) which is actively working to ensure that international documents in the field of habitat are implemented, has never heard of any process of discussion or negotiation on the implementation of the Habitat Agenda from any of our affiliates who are connected to NGOs and grassroots organizations in many countries around the world. To our knowledge, no panel of NGOs/CBOs has been consulted. In fact, many of these NGOs and CBOs have never even heard about the existence of an NPA in their country. This obviously means that the implementation of the Habitat Agenda has not even begun in many countries or that a lot remains to be done to involve partners in the process.

Habitat's role is challenging, both because the Centre is not one of the stronger agencies in the UN system and because most Governments are reluctant to prepare a report reflecting the actual situation in their country. If Habitat's role does not change post-Istanbul, it risks losing a lot of credibility. After all, how can NGOs and CBOs efficiently perform their role at the local and national levels if Habitat, as a coordination structure, does not have the capacity to perform its own role?

The international community needs to push for the implementation of the Habitat Agenda through NPAs. We propose that:

1) Habitat not only use indicators, but establish guidelines for national and local monitoring and evaluation of the implementation of the Habitat Agenda. In these guidelines, special care should be given to:
   a) participation of all parties in the implementation process; and
   b) implementation of NPAs through compliance with the Habitat Agenda;
2) Habitat ask governments to prepare 2-5 year reports which follow these guidelines. These guidelines must be sufficiently detailed to cover the Habitat Agenda;
3) The UN Commission on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights must be able to monitor the implementation of the Habitat Agenda through national reports and a complaints procedure. (paragraph 233: "... the important role of the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights in monitoring those aspects of the Habitat Agenda that relate to State parties' compliance with the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights should be emphasized.") A clear division of work between the Committee and Habitat thus has to be defined; and
4) In the application of the substance of the Habitat Agenda, NGOs and CBO be associated with monitoring compliance of recommendations and commitments described in the Habitat Agenda. In this respect, we recommend that:
   a) an NGO/CBO body which could monitor the implementation of the Habitat Agenda be set up; and
   b) at sessions of the Commission on Human Settlements, evaluation reports on governments' performance be circulated as official documents.

Daniel Galand is the Secretary General of Habitat Plus, an NGO based in Paris, France.

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REGIONAL PERSPECTIVE

AFRICA

The following summary is based on a Habitat II Conference document (A/CONF.165/CRP.5) which highlights the main findings of the over 100 National Reports and National Plans of Action submitted to UNCHS (Habitat) — the secretariat for the Conference — in 1995 and 1996.

In addition to a high national demographic growth rate often exceeding 3 per cent per year, African cities and towns face urban growth rates varying from 4 per cent to 10 per cent. Nevertheless, in the last decade, many cities have experienced a decrease in their population growth rate. This is particularly visible in large metropolitan areas where economic and population crises have worsened living conditions and resulted in urban growth shifting to secondary towns. Urbanization levels in the region vary from less than 10 per cent to 60 per cent.

During the 1980s, the deterioration of the urban environment could be explained by poor economic growth, rapid urban growth, poor local revenue collection, rural bias in government priorities, and a poor system of urban governance which ignored the action and potential participation of civil society.

In their National Plans of Action, most African countries propose to reduce the gap between the formal sector which provides expensive credit, conventional employment and serviced land to high-income groups, and the so-called informal sector which incorporates more than 50 per cent of urban populations in terms of employment and provides low-standard services to the majority. Reviews of legal frameworks, as well as specific support programmes to improve access to land titles, credit, training, and business sites, are recommended to ensure that the informal sector is recognized and legalized and has security of tenure.

For the development of urban areas, African Governments intend to finance primary infrastructure and then let the market organize itself within guidelines provided by land-use planning schemes. Other services will be completed later and the cost will be recovered through taxation. Labour-intensive projects will be developed.

The development of a balanced urban network is pointed out as an essential factor for rural development and in terms of providing services to rural communities.

Formal housing-finance institutions in Africa have often failed to address the needs of the majority, and housing is mainly financed through individual and informal strategies. Financial proposals include the improvement of tax recovery for infrastructure and services and for housing, creation of secondary mortgage markets, development of savings and loans through the commercial banking system or through a housing bank, and developing and supporting housing cooperatives.

Local partnerships with the private sector (formal and informal) and with communities are considered essential to the improvement of access to basic services. Most national reports consider the effective management of human settlements as dependent upon the efficiency of local authorities. Several Governments propose to increase the autonomy of local authorities and to reinforce their financial and human-resource base. Many proposals deal with reducing mismanagement by local authorities to improve transparency and accountability both to central governments and to the public. More attention will be given to social and economic processes than to spatial and physical issues which have traditionally been given priority in development planning.

Some reports point out civic participation, democracy and good governance as factors that need to be developed to prevent social conflicts, ethnic and civil wars and the resulting destruction. Countries recently affected by civil wars emphasize programmes on reconstruction and resettlement of returnees, mainly in towns, and highlight the need for international financial assistance.

Although African women are not legally discriminated against in access to land, credit, and employment, they are often penalized by customary laws especially in relation to inheritance. Women, who are reported to represent between 10 and 25 per cent of heads of household in capital cities, are very often identified as key economic actors in poverty reduction and in the informal sector. Many countries propose specific action to increase income-generation for women. NGOs dealing with street children are also being supported.

African countries recognize that domestic financial resources are essential for the development of human settlements and that international resources must be allocated to support national processes. International financial assistance is required to rehabilitate and improve basic infrastructure and services, to restructure unplanned urban areas and to develop support programmes for micro-enterprises.

Istanbul + 1: The Case of Senegal

by Malick Gaye

Habitat II set a precedent in Senegal by giving civil society the opportunity to take part in the preparation of the country's National Plan of Action. This Plan is a product of all those actors who were recognized during Habitat II as being full partners in the preparatory process. This qualitative change was not the result of a simple decree; rather it was the culmination of a two year-long participatory process at the global level. Today, the political will exists to make this partnership a dynamic permanent fixture.

Senegal's National Plan of Action was formulated according to a guide prepared by the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat) and discussed beforehand with representatives of African Governments and their partners during World Habitat Day, celebrated in Dakar in October 1994.

The concept underlying this guide was based on UN General Assembly Resolution 47/180 which invited NGOs and other organizations of civil society to participate and contribute to the Conference and invited Member States to set up broad-based national preparatory processes.

At the 16th session of the Commission on Human Settlements, held from 28 April to 7 May 1997, Member Governments unanimously agreed that partners, including NGOs, could influence deliberations as long as they were active in national committees. Fortunately, this was indeed the case in Senegal where the various partners influenced its National Preparatory Committee and its National Monitoring Committee.

The Monitoring Committee wants to review the National Plan of Action in accordance with the suggestions made by several participants in the Feedback and Recommendation on Habitat II session that was held on 26 July 1996. This session was attended by various members of the private sector, NGOs, CBOs and others. The implementation of the Plan should take account of the vision of all actors involved.

How is the Monitoring Done?

The Monitoring Committee was set up by the Senegalese Prime Minister on 5 March 1997. It is made up of various actors working on human settlements management. It is a sort of assembly of actors, mostly urban, who comprise a specialist committee that is answerable to the Monitoring Committee. The actors have undertaken to pool their vision of the future of urban development. Each actor presents his/her goal, action, programmes and projects. The committee intends to set up a system for transmitting information and communication between initiative-takers. This is not just with a view to assuring a synergy between different programmes but also to create a coherent research and analysis framework for engendering change.

With What Means and With What Legal Support?

In order for the National Plan of Action to become a reference document, it needed to fulfil the criteria imposed by Senegalese law. This involved presenting the document to an interdepartmental council where it became the object of a project of presidential decree, for approval by Parliament. As the Plan required amendment — that is, putting the actors' programmes and institutional policies in perspective — the decree was postponed. Nevertheless, an important decentralisation policy, partially applied in towns and villages, was implemented in Senegal six months after Habitat II. Decentralisation relies on the concept of partnership and the promotion of endogenous resources at the local, regional and national level, which are all provided for in the National Plan for Habitat.

In preparation for the implementation of the Plan, the Senegalese Department of Town-Planning and Housing seized the opportunity to define the Government's sectoral policy by utilising the Plan as a framework for this policy, which will assist in the preparation of the World Bank strategy of assistance for the implementation of the 9th Economic and Social Development plan.

There is hope for implementation of the Habitat Plan judging from the experience of the Dakar Urban Information Proximity System, which is currently being established thanks to international cooperation (involvement of the Habitat Office and Unitar in Geneva) and partnership between the Dakar urban actors (Dakar Urban Community, Enda Tiers Monde and grassroots community organizations).

Malick Gaye is Coordinator of Relais pour le Developpement Urbain Participe (RUP), based in Dakar, Senegal.

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Localizing Agenda 21 in Essaouira

by Ahmed Rafik

Prior to the implementation of Agenda 21 at Essaouira, Morocco, many provincial and national officials did not understand the importance and the underlying goals of Agenda 21 — the blueprint for sustainable development adopted at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development in 1992. Some made no secret of their lack of interest in Agenda 21, believing that it was of no relevance for towns and their populations.

However, thanks to the determination of a consortium of Belgian universities, consultancy firms and NGOs and the officials of the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat), the sceptics were finally convinced of the importance of implementing Agenda 21 in the Municipality, after they were confronted with facts about its benefits. The town of Essaouira is, therefore, proud to have been chosen as a priority action town by Habitat's Localizing Agenda 21 project.

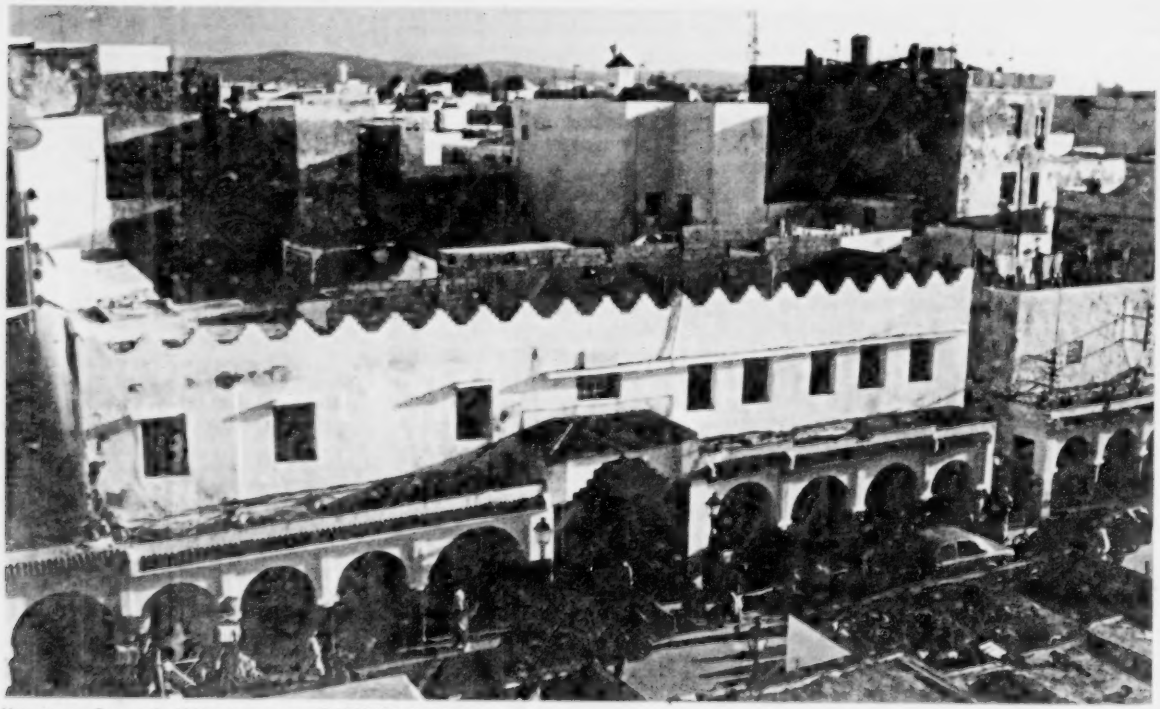
Following Habitat II, we have endeavoured to adapt Agenda 21 to the local context, bearing in mind the town's specific features, its way of life, its traditions and customs.

The town of Essaouira is well-known for its spirit of openness, cohabitation, tolerance and conviviality. All these qualities have contributed to creating an atmosphere of confidence and a spirit of collaboration and mutual participation, which have resulted in a true consensus on the main areas of sustainable development of our town.

Some successful projects as a result of this partnership include:

- Breaches in the wall surrounding the city were shored and strengthened (a project carried out with the personal financial support of the President of the Municipal Council, Miloud Chaabi' in collaboration with all actors concerned).
- The construction of dwellings for the rehousing of 27 disaster victim families during the 1995 torrential rains, in collaboration with Enda-Maghreb and the private sector.
- Restoration and rehabilitation of the Law Courts, which will accommodate the Centre for Planning and Urban Action and through which the Municipality will closely collaborate with various associations and clubs.
- Architectural study of the Danish Consulate in collaboration with the Minister for Cultural Affairs and UNESCO.
- The organization of two workshops, the first on consultation and diagnosis; the second on safeguarding the ancient town of Medina and on the problems relating to the sustainable urban development of the town of Essaouira.
- The "A Tree for My Town" campaign, in collaboration with the Gerpe association.
- A project for the creation of a city park in collaboration with the French Embassy, the Ministry for Forestry and Water, the provincial authorities, a property developer and local associations.

It goes without saying that sustainable development cannot be achieved without the effective partnership of the residents through non-governmental organizations and various neighbourhood associations. In this context, Agenda 21 has



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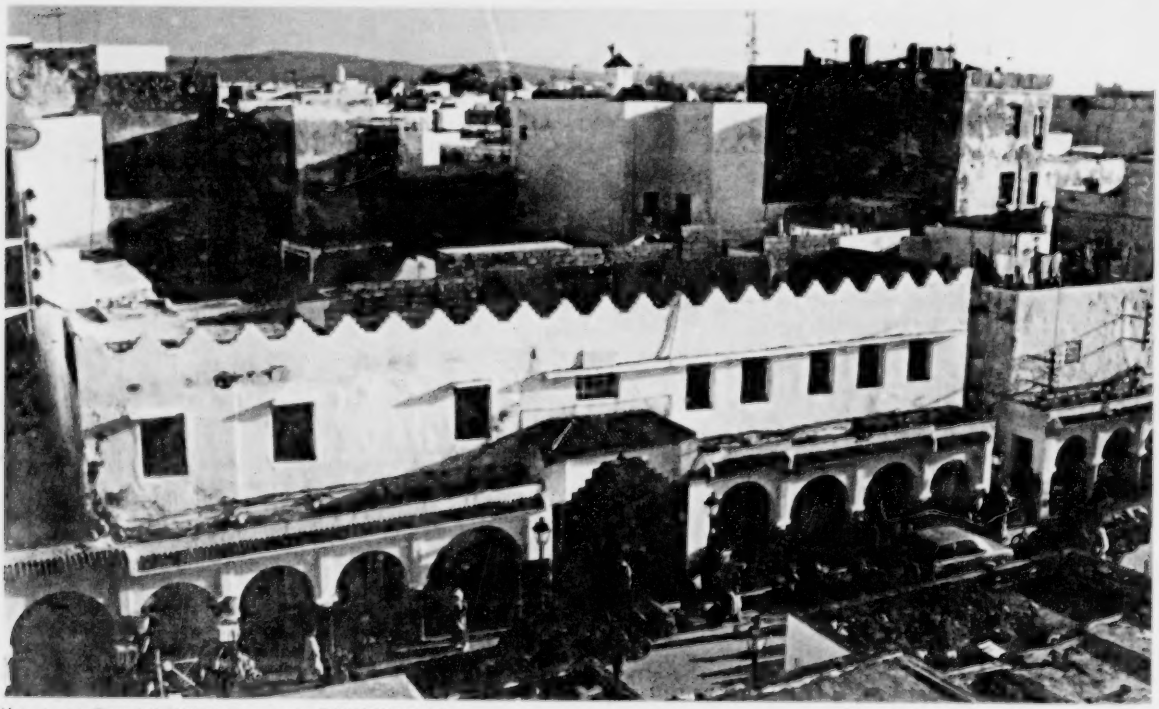

Main street in Essaouira's old, historic town centre© UNCHS/Rafael Tuts

been able to involve certain associations in timely and positive actions to promote best practices and public awareness in order to ensure the continuity and sustainability of the spirit of Habitat II and Agenda 21. The aim is to introduce a new dynamism, a spirit of participatory actions which promote pride and improve the well-being of the population.

This aim places municipal officials in the vanguard, working to ensure the success of the "Localizing Agenda 21" mission and consequently guaranteeing our community a decent lifestyle by raising their awareness and ensuring a more effective mobilization of resources and capital.

Our task is not so much one of taking stock of problems, as of studying them in a thorough and objective manner, together with the principal actors, so as to identify the priority measures and to implement a working strategy.

Our goal, as elected members, is to galvanize this process, with a view to carrying out a focused campaign for sustainable and harmonious development within an acceptable environmental framework. This approach necessitates active and close collaboration with the "Localizing Agenda 21" Programme which is making laudable efforts towards the propagation of a sound work programme for the identification, analysis, information and training in best practices in the area of urban planning. The success of this noble mission largely depends on our motivation, conviction and participation. I have no doubt that all elected members will do their best to ensure that our town, Essaouira, sets an example as a best practice, thereby contributing to sustainable urban development around the world.

Ahmed Rafik, a Vice-Chairman of the Essaouria Municipal Council until June 1997, has been an active member of the Localizing Agenda 21 team in Essaouria, Morocco.

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[1] *Mr. Chaabi was president of the municipal council until June 1997.*

Habitat Special Programme for Africa

The Habitat Special Programme for Africa (HSPA) has been designed by UNCHS (Habitat), in consultation with African Governments, as a follow-up to the second United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II) held in Istanbul in June 1996. It aims at supporting the implementation of the Habitat Agenda — the Global Plan of Action adopted by the Habitat II Conference — and the National Plans of Action (NPAs) elaborated by African countries during the Habitat II preparatory process.

The two basic strategies proposed in the Habitat Agenda: a) enablement and participation; and b) capacity-building and institutional development; have been applied to define the immediate objective of the HSPA, which will address four programmatic areas: i) shelter and social services; ii) urban management; iii) environment and infrastructure; and iv) assessment, monitoring and information.

The immediate objectives of the HSPA are the following:

I. to help African countries define/finalize their NPA implementation strategies;

II. to operationalize a partnership culture for human settlements development;

III. to strengthen capacities at sub-regional and national levels;

IV. to assist African countries in their resource mobilization efforts;

V. to establish and disseminate common monitoring and assessment tools;

VI. to strengthen African networks with a view to promoting the regional exchange of best practices, expertise and experience; and

VII. to set up an African Habitat Forum and ensure a high-level multi-partner regional follow-up to Habitat II.

While it is acknowledged that the implementation of NPAs is the primary responsibility of each country at the national and local levels, the HSPA will allow UNCHS (Habitat) to support national activities and to act as a catalyst in the mobilization of technical cooperation, as recommended in the Habitat Agenda.

The HSPA should be implemented during an initial period of four years. It requires a total external budget of approximately US$5 million, in order to support the group of seven inputs needed to achieve the related immediate objectives. The HSPA has been submitted to multilateral and bilateral agencies — which have contributed to the Habitat II preparatory process in 1995-1996 — for their financial support. The programme was officially launched during the 16th session of the Commission on Human Settlements, which was held in Nairobi from 28 April to 7 May 1997.

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Nakuru: Stimulating Local Authorities to Tackle Local Problems

by V.L. Ondendo and Jane Ndonga

Less than a year after starting operational activities, Localizing Agenda 21, a UNCHS (Habitat) project supported by the Government of Belgium, has succeeded in stimulating local authorities in developing regions to take action to tackle serious local problems, identified as such by inhabitants and local authorities alike. In Nakuru, Kenya, for instance, an action plan was developed to solve a long-standing conflict between local transport operators and the municipal market over the use of an open urban space.

Under the same plan, a public/community joint-venture was established to build a refuse-transfer station for solid waste disposal in low-income neighbourhoods. This plan has further paved the way for major investment programming for environmental improvement. Action plans like that of Nakuru have a long-lasting impact. They are the direct result of the project's approach to integrating awareness-building, local leadership training and mobilizing of resources. Lessons learned will be useful in other situations, particularly in the developing world.

Nakuru : A successful example of how local authorities can get communities involved in environmental projects.

Consultation and Action Planning

A Consultative workshop, held in November 1995, was a first step towards agreeing on several actions for implementation of the Localizing Agenda 21 programme in Nakuru. Participants in the workshop included councillors, council officers, central government officers, researchers, NGOs, CBOs, and representatives from manufacturers. The result of the meeting was the drawing up of an Urban Pact that details various actions plans and responsibilities of the different actors within a strategic structure planning framework.

There has been a series of subsequent consultations and sharing of information with the actors in urban planning and management in Nakuru. These meetings are basically forums for capacity building, for agreeing on priorities and strategies and for sharing experiences with other towns facing similar problems.

Participation of Civil Society

The Municipal Council of Nakuru has intensified efforts to encourage communities to get involved in project formulation, planning, design and implementation. In this regard, with the facilitation of the Council, the following activities have been undertaken:

- Community-based environmental action groups have been formed as a result of community awareness seminars. These are responsible for estate cleaning e.g. garbage collection and unlocking drains in their neighbourhoods.
- The Council has put up refuse chambers at strategic places for temporary storage of refuse before transfer to dumping sites.
- Schools are participating in the development of tree nurseries as a step towards greening of the town.
- Successful consultation has been initiated with industrialists/manufacturers on acceptance and implementation of effluence bylaws whose main objective is to control hazardous industrial effluents from finding their way into the sewerage system. This will improve the environment in the town as well as in the Lake Nakuru National Park.

Resource Mobilization

Apart from the core funding from the Belgian Government through UNCHS (Habitat) and additional resources mobilized from international agencies, NGOs and the private sector, several action plans have been initiated with the aim of improving revenue collection and management of funds by the Council, including:

- Improving planning and management of bus park and market area;
- Revitalization of Council rental housing stock;
- Rationalizing mechanisms for pricing and cost-recovery purposes of all urban services offered by the Council.

How Local Partnership Initiatives Can Help

Based on our experience, we believe that local partnership initiatives contribute in many ways towards a better living environment because:

- Community mobilization in management of urban affairs is promoted;
- Cost-sharing is encouraged; and
- Sustainability of the initiative is ensured.

V.L. Ondedo is a Councillor and Chairman of the Finance and General Purposes Committee at Nakuru Municipal Council. Jane Ndonga is the Assistant Town Clerk in the Council.

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ASIA AND THE PACIFIC

The following summary is based on a Habitat II Conference document (A/CONF.165/CRP.5) which highlights the main findings of over 100 National Reports and National Plans of Action submitted to UNCHS (Habitat) — the secretariat for the Conference — in 1995 and 1996.

Asia and the Pacific is a vast and diversified region with population densities varying from 700 people per sq.km. to as low as 6.5 people per sq.km. Annual population growth rates tend to be between 2 and 4 per cent, with urban population growth rates often slightly higher than the national average.

Urbanization trends in the region are also quite varied. The Middle East is the most urbanized, with some countries having over 70 per cent of their populations living in urban areas. In the South-East, levels of urbanization are between 20 and 50 per cent, while in South Asia, they are between 20 and 30 per cent.

Over the past two decades, there has been a major change in housing policies with the role of Governments in the provision of housing shifting from that of developer to that of facilitator, i.e. from public to private provision. Most Governments report they are still directly involved only in the provision of low-income housing. The low-income groups needs are reported to be met by public housing and the informal sector.

Reduction of poverty has been, and continues to be, a key priority in the less developed countries of the region. There is a growing consensus in most countries on the significant role of the urban sector in national economic development, for example, in creating jobs in the non-agricultural sector, in promoting rural-urban linkages and in harnessing the economic opportunities available in the sub-region.

Housing conditions in the poorest countries in Asia and the Pacific are often characterized by sub-standard housing with poor infrastructure and services. Slums and squatter settlements have proliferated in many of the large cities. The emphasis in most reports is on the provision of shelter, access to land and basic infrastructure and services for low-income groups. Urban productivity is linked to the productivity of the urban poor. Urban renewal policies focus not only on physical aspects of neighbourhoods but also on the social aspects, including employment, education and health. However, in more industrialized countries, the focus is on decreasing housing shortages for both low- and middle-income groups and on improving housing standards, particularly the per capita floor area, to meet higher standards.

The importance of mobilizing sources of finance is emphasized with proposals such as privatization of housing-finance institutions; encouraging commercial banks and private developers to invest in the low-cost housing sector with bank quotas, subsidized loans and tax exemption; promoting housing mortgages and a secondary mortgage market and encouraging and supporting community-based finance systems and housing cooperatives.

The need for sustainable land-use is acknowledged by most countries in the Asia and Pacific region. Those with large urban populations and megacities propose to regulate the population distribution and ensure regional development by developing small and medium-sized towns and strengthening regional and inter-regional development.

The more developed countries in the region propose to improve the management of transportation systems through the development of a more diversified transport infrastructure which takes into account environmental impacts, affordability, and energy efficiency. These countries also highlight the need to strengthen environmental awareness and management and to ensure a more stringent enforcement of regulations.

Most countries in the region acknowledge their lack of institutional capacity to deal with human settlements and urban problems and propose as a starting point the review of existing institutional and legal frameworks related to human settlements. They also recommend the promotion of participatory approaches by raising public awareness and participation in development issues, by strengthening the capacity of local authorities and by supporting partnerships between communities, NGOs, CBOs and the private sector.

There is a consensus that regional cooperation is an important dimension of international cooperation; international assistance should be timely, appropriate and responsive to the needs of the recipient country. And it should be unconditional.

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India: Post-Istanbul Initiatives

by Vinay D. Lall

Habitat I and II: From Concepts and Approaches to Action

The Global Strategy for Shelter to the Year 2000 (GSS), a major Habitat I follow-up activity adopted by the UN General Assembly in 1988, stimulated national governments to prepare housing policy documents based on the enabling approach. However, although this approach was widely accepted, it was not fully implemented. The Habitat Agenda, Habitat II's end product, provides an operational framework to implement these concepts and strategies.

One year is, however, too short a period to assess the impact of a major document that will guide the human settlements sector for the next two decades. Substantial water has, nevertheless, flown down the Bosphorus to provide an opportunity to review the progress on commitments made, and in that context, suggest action for its implementation.

While all key actors enthusiastically participated in the preparatory process of National Reports (NR) and National Plans of Action (NPAs) that degree of participation is missing in follow-up activities. My personal view is that post-Habitat II activities started in good earnest but have slowed down considerably thereafter. This is a cause of concern. Contributory factors are absence of funding from national and international sources, lack of an institutional mechanism, and less pressure to meet a deadline.

Follow-up Action in India

India was one of the first countries to initiate a sensitisation process on implementation of National Plans of Action and the Habitat Agenda. Two major national activities were undertaken at the initiative of the Ministry of Urban Affairs and Employment. The first was a National Indicators Seminar held, in September 1996, organized with technical inputs from the research institution, Society for Development Studies (SDS). (SDS developed a national indicators programme providing indicators for 19 Indian cities for which India received the Best Performance Award for Developing Countries in Istanbul.)

The second major activity was the National Housing Seminar on "Adequate Shelter for All", held in October 1996, organized by the Ministry of Urban Affairs and Employment (the Ministry in-charge of overseeing implementation of the National Plan of Action and the Habitat Agenda.) Six issues were examined: housing needs assessment; building materials and technology; finance; habitat-related infrastructure and services; legal and regulatory reforms; and the role of key actors. National concern and possibly commitment at the highest level was reflected in the Prime Minister's inaugural address and the Deputy Chairman of the Planning Commission's Valedictory Address. The Minister in charge of human settlements made a landmark commitment to launch a National Housing Enumeration Survey.

Action Programmes

The National Slum Development Programme, is an important post-Habitat II initiative to offer sustainable housing and habitat-environment solutions to the urban poor. To strengthen this Programme, the Planning Commission has constituted a Working Group to examine funds allocation criteria for this programme. The Government of India has also made a commitment to provide support to develop a housing and urban indicators programme in the research institution that developed the programme for Habitat II. This commitment was made by the Minister of Urban Affairs and Employment at the Sixteenth Session of the Commission on Human Settlements in April 1997; it has now to be implemented.

Other illustrative initiatives include rationalizing legislative cobwebs like the Urban Land (Ceiling and Regulation) Act and rental legislation that affect housing and land markets, implementation of Constitution Amendment Acts to instal elected local governments and empower women, confer title of land or tenurial status to squatter settlements, facilitate flow of credit to lower segments of housing market and for micro enterprises.

To ensure that commitments made at Istanbul are integrated into national mainstream development programmes, dovetailing them into the Ninth Five Year Plan (1997-2002), now under finalisation, would be an effective strategy. I feel this integration is on the anvil.

Role of SDS and Other NGOs

Indian NGOs have taken some initiatives to implement the Habitat Agenda. The convergence of NGO synergies has not emerged due to lack of funds and lack of an institutional system. The latter deficiency will be addressed as soon as an NGO Habitat Forum is established by revitalizing the National Human Settlements Forum (Habitat II activity), which met only once in March 1996. This would be a valuable NGO contribution to coordinate activities and instal a watchdog on implementation of the Habitat Agenda. Habitat II indicators could be used for this purpose.

The NGO role in Habitat II activities was best reflected in the work of the Society for Development Studies (SDS), the Chief Consultant for drafting the National Report (NR) and the National Plan of Action (NPA) and National Consultant for the Housing and Urban Indicators Programme. As a follow-up, SDS provided technical assistance to the Government of India to organize a post-Habitat II meeting, and to extend the indicators programme into the rural sector through the Rural Development Department. The Government is providing capacity-building inputs and is playing a key role in the development process of the indicators programme at the South Asian regional level. UNCHS (Habitat) expects SDS to "become one of the principal regional institutions for building capacity at the local and national levels" (communication from the Executive Director of Habitat, in a letter dated 13 March 1997). India's Ninth Five-Year Plan may provide a special role for quantitative and qualitative indicators in

monitoring and undertaking impact assessment work in housing and the urban sector partly due to promotional efforts of SDS.

As part of its programme to implement the National Plan of Action and the Habitat Agenda, SDS has taken up the task of developing a database for low-income housing and formulating need-based interventions. A recent SDS research study assessed capital formation in informal housing in slum settlements in the four megacities of Mumbai, Calcutta, Chennai and Delhi, providing a valuable quantitative base for developing affordable credit programmes. SDS estimates on housing needs of households below the poverty line are likely to provide a basis for a new housing programme for the very poor. SDS is to take up a Census survey of all informal housing stock in slum and squatter settlements in Delhi to develop, as a follow-up to Habitat II, an integrated and participatory human settlements programme, in terms of shelter, basic services, simultaneous upgrading of income and housing, to ensure an affordable and sustainable housing solution. This programme, to be implemented by the city government, with inputs of NGOs and the community, has a strong potential of emerging as a model activity in the implementation the Habitat Agenda. The survey results and development strategy are likely to be available in the first quarter of 1998.

Vinay D. Lall, the Director of the Society for Development Studies (SDS), a national research and training institution based in New Delhi, was responsible for drafting India's Habitat II National Report and National Plan of Action.

Jordan: Towards An Enabling Approach

by Yousef Hiasat

The Government of Jordan has continued to concentrate on human settlements development and the provision of adequate shelter for all as one of its major priorities in the post-Istanbul period. The Government's interest in these issues has been manifested through formulation of specific actions and projects with objectives largely coinciding with those targeted by Habitat II. Among the projects and actions adopted by the Government are the following:

A: Housing Sector Restructuring Project

The Housing Sector Restructuring Project aims to support the Government's strategy to improve the efficiency of the housing and housing finance sectors, to promote private sector development in land and housing production and to reduce the Government's role in both sectors. The primary focus of the project is on housing finance. Through the establishment of a Secondary Mortgage Facility, the project aims to improve the efficiency with which medium- and long-term financial flows for mortgage lending are mobilized, to facilitate and foster competition in market-based mortgage lending and to lengthen the term structure of mortgage lending.

Jordan Mortgage Re-finance Company (JMRC) was established under the project. JMRC is expected to make mortgage lending more attractive to lenders, by permitting them to reduce the liquidity risks of medium- and long-term mortgage lending, and also possibly to access funds for housing at lower effective costs.

Through the implementation of institutional and regulatory reforms in the real estate sector, the project also aims to improve the enabling environment for responsive private sector participation and competition in land and housing development for lower income households. The principal regulatory reform measures endorsed by the Government comprise:

(a) Granting full rights to the private sector to adopt and use the more affordable plot sizes and building standards developed and used by the Housing and Urban Development Corporation (HUDC). Using these standards, all developers would benefit from improved zoning and development regulation, thus making private development significantly more affordable;

(b) Promoting, through zoning and re-zoning, the increased availability of residential areas in urban areas; and

(c) Simplifying and streamlining regulatory processes and procedures for land and housing sector development such as permits for building and land development.

B: The Social Productivity Programme

The Government of Jordan has launched the Social Productivity Programme as a major initiative designed to eliminate poverty as a serious social problem and to raise the productivity of its entire society through two (parallel) tracks. The first consists of direct actions to raise the living standards of the poor to an acceptable level. The second is a coordinated movement to increase social productivity to remove the causes of poverty and ensure greater welfare for all by addressing the five pillars of social productivity: health, education, information and technology, infrastructure and employment as well as the enabler of these five, the efficient operation of Government.

The first track of the project, which represents a direct attack on poverty, would begin in the first year of implementation, 1998, and has the following components:

1. Social assistance measures
2. Physical and social infrastructure
3. Micro Finance and Small Enterprises
4. Training the poor

For the second track, efforts have already started through some sectoral programmes such as the health sector development programme and the education development programme.

C: Other Related Actions

1. To raise the capacity of the small local councils with limited resources, it has been recently decided to merge small adjacent local councils into stronger ones capable of providing better services for their inhabitants.

2. The Government has taken a significant step in rectifying the cost

recovery system of the water and sanitation services. This step will help in minimizing the gap between the actual cost and amounts paid by the consumers — 60 per cent of the users from low-income households would not be affected from raising the prices of these services.

3. The Government has started practical steps towards conducting the land use planning on a regionally comprehensive basis. The Kingdom has been divided into three regional planning areas; task forces for this work have been formed; and the work has already started.

4. An institutional framework for privatization has been established. A Ministerial Committee headed by the Prime Minister was formed to regulate the privatization process, which is currently underway, to ensure economic growth and increase productivity efficiency. A technical unit within the Prime Minister's Office is established to implement privatization policies endorsed by this Committee.

The above mentioned projects and actions representing some of the present commitments of the Government and its priorities for the future in the field of human settlements developments are not only in line with the National Plan of Action but are a practical and strong translation of its policies.

Yousef Hiasat is the Director-General of Jordan's Housing and Urban Development Corporation.

Home Ownership in Thailand

Since the 1970s, housing in Thailand has been constructed by the private sector, whether through individual initiative or by commercial developers. Less than 8 per cent of the housing in Bangkok is public-sector housing. By mid-1980s the higher-income housing market experienced an over-supply, and developers began to explore new markets. They started to develop lower-cost housing by experimenting with innovative technologies, building new types of houses aimed at different income groups. However, a housing finance system was necessary to match housing supply and demand. Integrating this into the existing financial system has been the key in the current success story of the housing sector in Thailand's growing cities.

Apart from creating incentives for commercial banks to provide more home loans, the Government has contributed to the improvement of the housing finance system by establishing the Government Housing Bank. Its aim is to provide financing to housing developers and home buyers, in particular to lower-income groups. The Bank operates on a commercial basis. It is a market-driven organization and constantly develops new products and instruments to tap the savings market without the need for government funding.

In the last decade, the Government Housing Bank, now with 101 branches all over Thailand, has become the leading housing finance institution in terms of market share and consumer recognition. Due to an increased supply of low-cost housing, an improvement in the income of the population and the availability of affordable housing loans, home owner-ship has become possible to larger sections of the population. In 1980, the cheapest new private-sector housing unit on the market was affordable to only 15 per cent of the households in Bangkok. According to recent estimates 70 to 80 per cent of the households can now afford such housing units under the new loan conditions. For the first time home ownership has become a real possibility for Bangkok's growing population.

Source: Best Practices World Report No. 1, published by UNCHS (Habitat), April 1996.

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LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN

The following summary is based on a Habitat II Conference document (A/CONF.165/CRP.5) which highlights the main findings of over 100 National Reports and National Plans of Action submitted to UNCHS (Habitat) — the secretariat for the Conference — in 1995 and 1996.

Despite the heterogeneity of human settlements, urban populations in Latin America and the Caribbean stand at 50 to 60 per cent and even reach 75 per cent. The population growth rate is higher in cities than in rural areas (where it can even be negative), but it has greatly decreased in the last decade, particularly in the largest metropolitan areas.

Social crises, limited investment resources, demographic trends and rapid urbanization have resulted in a large deficit in housing, serviced land and infrastructure. This has led to the deterioration and overcrowding of existing housing stock, and the development of squatter and unplanned settlements, which house up to 60 per cent of the urban population in some cases. Inadequate rental housing policies have hampered private investment in developing and maintaining the existing housing stock. Conservation and rehabilitation of existing stock is a priority in some countries.

Access to potable water and adequate sanitation is still considered a key problem in many countries in Latin America and the Caribbean. Countries indicate that a more efficient cost-recovery system for infrastructure and services could be achieved through improved tax collection combined with progressive user charges. Upgrading and regularization of squatter settlements and uncontrolled urban areas remains a priority, including legalization of land tenure, upgrading housing through community-based housing institutions and the provision of loans.

New financing mechanisms were set up in answer to the gradual withdrawal of central governments from the direct provision of housing. In financing public housing, many countries in the region propose to deal with it by encouraging the participation of the private sector in the provision of loans and mortgages, taking into account the low demand for mortgages at market rates and the need to assist the very low income groups through new subsidy schemes and specific financial funds. For the poor, the promotion of non-conventional financial systems such as community loan systems and cooperatives is encouraged. International organizations are often identified as providers of credit for urban programmes.

The deficit in basic social infrastructure has resulted in environmental deterioration affecting major urban centres. Programmes to address contamination of water resources, soil erosion and aquifer rehabilitation are considered priorities in some countries. Progressive introduction of standards and measures is proposed to prevent and reduce the negative impacts of urban and industrial development on the environment.

Most countries in the region propose to rehabilitate, revitalize and/or increase the density in urban historical centres, taking into account preservation of architectural heritage. Recovery of urban land in central and low-density peri-central areas is pointed out as one way of preventing costly urban sprawl which damages the environment and agriculture.

In most Latin American and Caribbean countries, accelerated urbanization has concentrated the population in major urban centres and resulted in an unbalanced national and regional human-settlement network. Regional economic planning and strengthening of secondary towns are key factors identified to address this issue.

Informal economic activities in some countries represent more than 50 per cent of overall employment. Income disparities and social inequity have been on the increase in the last 20 years. Many countries, notwithstanding, have recently benefitted from improvement in social-development conditions. Most address urban poverty through national, regional and local economic programmes and they strongly link urban problems with economic development. Overcoming poverty is the most important goal in many countries, and housing is pointed out as a first step towards economic and social sustainability. Specific social programmes to address the needs of women, indigenous groups, children and youth will be developed. Support to informal-sector activities, small-scale businesses and industries through training programmes, access to cooperative credit and to business sites are also proposed.

Urban violence due to social and geographic exclusion, and the growth in drug-dealing, increasingly affect big cities in Latin America, breeding forms of violent repression and resulting in a large growth in private security services. The need for security is felt more and more by the poor and some countries will develop alternative methods managed by local authorities and based on partnerships (systems of justice based on mediation and forms of community policing).

Democratization has increased the responsibilities and autonomy of local authorities and facilitated the participation of the civil society in urban management. Some countries propose to strengthen the autonomy of regional and local authorities but technical and financial assistance from central institutions is seen as necessary, particularly in less-developed regions. The goal of many urban policies is the encouragement of citizen participation, and there are many proposals to establish community consultation mechanisms. NGOs and CBOs are identified as key actors in these processes. Some countries propose to decentralize housing policies to the regional and/or municipal level and, in large metropolitan areas, to create a basic urban administration subsystem (micro-urban regions) to bring administration closer to the population.

Colombia's "Cities and Citizenship" Policy

by Patricia Torres Arzayus

The Habitat Agenda describes areas of action to address problems of human settlements, including the following:

- policies for the integrated development of human settlements which guarantee equal access to and maintenance of basic services;
- opportunities to encourage positive interaction among culturally diverse groups;
- opportunities for productive employment;
- by-laws, standards and norms to facilitate the development of planning guidelines that take into consideration the needs and situations of all residents in relation to human settlements planning, development and decision-making and in the provision of and access to basic services;
- broad and non-discriminatory access to housing finance services; municipal-wide and/or regional planning, development and management strategies that address all aspects of urban activities in an integrated and focused manner.

To realise the above commitments, the Government of Colombia, in coordination with local authorities and under the leadership of the Ministry of Economic Development, is undertaking the following activities:

"Cities and Citizenship" policy

The "Cities and Citizenship" policy aims at swift urban social development through application of an integrated approach to urban problems by focusing the interests of different local actors, thereby reaching agreement and consensus for the collective design of city projects. This strategy has been developed in pilot projects supported by the national Government and has been expanded at the legislative and institutional levels with the new Land Development Act, which will promote the formulation of land management plans and the application of urban management instruments in all municipalities in Colombia.

Taken together, the "Cities and Citizenship" urban policy and the new Land Development Act offer essential tools for ensuring compliance with the main commitments at Habitat II because:

- they coordinate the planning and management of urban and rural matters, taking due account of the regional context;
- they perceive land management as a public function which grants residents access to basic services, to public roads and to infrastructure, which guarantee constitutional rights to an urban quality of life;
- they establish the practice of technical assistance for urban development based on the principles of consolidation and decentralization, capacity-building and strengthening of local autonomies. Regarding low-income housing, they oblige urban management plans to identify and cater to the requirements and complementary activities necessary to ensure that the right solutions are found.

Follow-up Commission

In compliance with the recommendations of Habitat II relating to the implementation and follow-up of the Habitat Agenda, the Ministries of Foreign Affairs and of Economic Development established, by a decree issued in April 1997, the Colombian Commission for Integrated Follow-up. National coordination of the Commission will be effected through the Colombia Habitat Foundation, a mixed, non-profit organization of public and private actors.

The objective of the Follow-up Commission is to identify and assess national achievements in sustainable urban development and adequate housing for all, to formulate recommendations to enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of relevant activities and to strengthen the institutional framework. The Commission includes subcommittees on indicators and best practices. It is proposed that the indicators subcommittee should be concerned with optimizing the existing indicators and generating new indicators, with a view to facilitating the work of social workers, individuals and governmental and non-governmental institutions involved in the identification, guidance, implementation and assessment of human settlement policies. The best practices subcommittee is developing a proposal on ways to design models for follow-up, dissemination and national and international cooperation. In conclusion, it should be noted that the initiatives taken by the national Government are set forth in Decree 1215 of 30 April 1997 of the Ministry of Economic Development, and are complemented by the new Land Development Act, recently approved by the Congress of the Republic.

Patricia Torres Arzayus is Deputy Minister for Housing, Urban Development and Drinking Water at the Ministry of Economic Development, Republic of Colombia.

Costa Rica's Commitment to Habitat II

by Eloisa Ulibarri Pernús

FUPROVI (Fundación Promotora de Vivienda) is a private organization that has been assisting more than 12,000 Costa Rican families over the last ten years, to build their own houses and communities in an organized, participatory manner.

With the involvement of NGOs, cooperatives, private financial entities, public institutions, and the community, an aggressive Housing Improvement Programme was launched in 1996 which, to this date, has helped approximately 2,300 families. These actions are geared towards improving the assets of dwellings built by the concerned families, through facilitating access to financial, material and human resources.

The level of importance that the national Government has accorded these programmes has enhanced the involvement of community organizations, which have experienced improvement through seminars for training and technical assistance offered them by FUPROVI and similar organizations.

As far as access to land is concerned, a National Programme for Land Legalization was launched in 1995 which will turn 45,000 people in Costa Rica into land owners.

These are some of the actions that Cost Rica has promoted in accordance with the commitments made at Habitat II and with the National Plan for the year 2000. Many of these actions are but a small step towards the overall solution of the problem of human settlements in the nation. Nevertheless, there is a commitment by many sectors of society, especially the non-governmental sector, to move ahead in this direction, with the input of new ideas, qualified and committed human resources, and a population that is willing to contribute towards its own development.

Eloisa Vlibarri Pernús is the Executive Director of Fundación Promotora de Vivienda (FUPROVI), based in San José, Costa Rica.

Brazil: Mobilizing for Change

by Rosa Moura

Despite the fact that the quality of shelter and the environment are deteriorating in Brazil, they have not been a national priority. One of the major accomplishments of the Habitat II Conference was that it focused attention on these issues and helped mobilize Governments and civil society to identify problems and point to solutions.

The Road to Istanbul

In 1995, as part of the preparatory process for Habitat II, governmental, non-governmental and academic sectors in the Paraná region of Brazil started a series of debates on the objectives of Habitat II. These Meetings had representatives of Governments, non-governmental and academic sectors, as well as Paraná and Santa Catarina Members of Parliament and representatives of other Brazilian states. The intention was to act in harmony with the national preparatory process as a form of mutual strengthening.

Apart from offering a formal contribution to the national preparatory process, these Meetings resulted in what can be considered the main achievement of this debate phase: the establishment of the Habitat Forums in Paraná and Santa Catarina, made up of more than one hundred representatives, with equal representation. The Forums emphasized, as the basic premise for their action, the understanding that activities and deliberations should result from a process of democratic decision-making and from joint endeavours among the various sectors.

The Forums helped to identify local priorities which included regional management, rural habitat, territorial planning of human settlements and its ecological and environmental aspects, promotion of citizenship in new metropolitan areas and general and specific questions on housing rights in human settlements.

At the request of the National Committee for Habitat II, the submission of good practices developed by the sectors was promoted; of these, 18 were selected. The Paraná experiences on slum urbanization and use of recycled rubbish for house construction, developed by the Municipality of Londrina and the environmental audit for the sanitation programme of the Curitiba Metropolitan Region, developed by the Environmentalist Forum of the RMC, were selected among these 18.

Apart from the activities aiming at Habitat II, the Forums took part in the discussion on the project of national legislation on urban development, and in local debate processes on urban master plans. This contributed to the revision of Curitiba's master plan.

All these activities provided a legitimate space for debate and discussion which will definitely not end after the Conference.

Continuity Agenda

In October 1996, the Forums held a **Meeting for Evaluation of Habitat II** in Curitiba with the objective of popularizing and analyzing the results of the Habitat II Conference. Respecting the "parity representation" principle that always guided the activities of these Forums, the evaluation was conducted by governmental, non-governmental and academic entities, and assisted by invited specialists that were in Istanbul. The discussions not only summarized critically the results of the Conference, but also emphasised the right to habitation, environment and sustainable development and land reform, all considered regional priorities.

Based on the Meeting results, recently published by IPARDES, the Paraná and Santa Catarina Habitat Forums started to work on drafting a Regional Agenda which will be adopted after broad-based consultations thereby and a public event, thereby consolidating priorities and establishing commitments between the various levels of government and civil society.

Rosa Moura is a geographer at the Paraná Institute of Social and Economic Development (PARDES) and a representative at the Paraná Habitat Forum Executive Secretariat in Curitiba, Brazil.

Popular Participation in Porto Alegre

by Szilard Fricska

For the past eight years, the Brazilian city of Porto Alegre has been involved in an innovative experiment in the budgetary process. Its so-called "Participatory Budget" blends traditional representative democracy — in which elected city officials represent civil society — and direct democracy - in which the citizen's direct voice in the decision-making process curtails the traditional powers of elected representatives.

The Context

Capital of the state of Rio Grande do Sul in Brazil, Porto Alegre's population is 1.2 million within a greater metropolitan area of 3 million inhabitants. Porto Alegre experienced such explosive growth rates in the 1970s that nearly one-third of its population lacked access to clean water, adequate sewerage and other basic infrastructure. A passive political culture had developed based on a tradition of centralized, non-transparent government. The scarcity of financial resources due to a flawed tax system further inhibited the opportunities for change.

Tax reforms served as the catalyst not only to free capital for investment, but also to initiate the Participatory Budget process. It rapidly became clear, however, that there would not be sufficient resources to satisfy everyone's needs. Priorities would have to be agreed upon. The differences in priorities between Porto Alegre's rich and poor were immediately clear: in the poorer sections, for example, residents identified a basic sewer system as their foremost priority, while the richer areas demanded cleaner streets and more parks.

How these differences have been reconciled is the story of Porto Alegre's participatory approach.

The Process

The city has been divided into 16 regions to facilitate the full participation of the population. In addition, five other thematic structures have been created: city organisation and urban development; transportation and mobility; health and social services; education, culture and leisure; and financial development and tax planning.

Each year, two large meetings are held, both in the regional groupings and also along the thematic lines. In the first meeting, the previous years' investment plan is evaluated and the expenditures are scrutinized. In the second meeting, priorities are selected and counsellors which will represent these priorities are elected. In addition, many sub-regional and thematic meetings are held to ensure that the residents of every street, every city region and each thematic groupings all have an opportunity to voice their concerns.

Porto Alegre city officials meeting with residents. Residents not only set priorities, but also decide how the city budget will be spent.

After the priorities are chosen and the delegates and representatives of each regional and thematic structure are elected, an Investment Plan is developed and forwarded to the City's executive council. It is here that direct democracy meets representative democracy. While the executive body of elected representatives retains the right to modify and amend the Investment Plan, the participatory process prevents them from making fundamental changes.

Between 15 and 25 percent of Porto Alegre's annual budget is allocated according to this participatory model. In dollar terms, over 700 million dollars in investment revenue has been allocated in the period 1989-1996.

The Results

In terms of Porto Alegre's foremost priority — basic sanitation — 65,000 households have successfully accessed the City's water supply since 1990. Today 98 percent of households are served by the water system. In 1989, only 46 percent of the population was served by the sewerage system, whereas by the end of 1996 the percentage increased to over 80.

Another budget priority has been street pavement in the suburbs. On average, 25 to 30 kilometres of roads are paved each year in the poorest and suburban areas of the City.

In education, enrollments doubled between 1988 and 1995, with significant improvements in the quality of education.

But these numbers are but a small part of the story. The real success of Porto Alegre's Participative Budget can be found in the changes in the city's political culture which now value participation, transparency and accountability as never before.

Currently, over 70 cities are implementing their own Participatory Budgets based on the Porto Alegre experience.

Szilard Fricska is Associate Best Practices Officer at UNCHS (Habitat).

The above article is based on Porte Alegre's submission to the UNCHS (Habitat) Best Practices database.

For more information on Porto Alegre's participatory budget, please contact:
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CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE

The following summary is based on a Habitat II Conference document (A/CONF.165/CRP.5) which highlights the main findings of over 100 National Reports and National Plans of Action submitted to UNCHS (Habitat) — the secretariat for the Conference — in 1995 and 1996.

The level of urbanization in Central and Eastern Europe is above 60 per cent and the population is relatively stable. The centralized system that operated previously in most countries was characterized by low productivity and efficiency, overemployment, and a distorted pricing system. Environmental considerations were disregarded, and polluting technologies and high-energy consumption patterns were common.

The transition period in the former Communist bloc is characterized by restructuring, privatization, foreign investments, trade liberalization, introduction of private land-ownership, mass privatization of housing and a rise in the property market, with the appropriate legislation already adopted or under preparation. In most countries, more than 50 per cent of the housing stock is privately-owned, although private land ownership is still not possible in some places. In some instances, the lack of individual resources has hampered housing privatization and has also caused a decline in the maintenance and rehabilitation of existing housing.

Implementation of economic reforms has raised the cost of living, increased unemployment and led to a drop in construction activities. However, the GDP of most countries is now gradually improving. Many countries seek to reduce poverty through the implementation of social reforms, the promotion of sustainable economic growth, the development of long-term and medium-term credit; the improvement of legal frameworks for the advancement of capital markets and encouragement of foreign capital, and the use of modern technologies.

Many countries in Central and Eastern Europe have new housing policies in place, with the key objectives being the allocation of land for private housing construction, the provision of urban infrastructure, and the development of adequate financial instruments. Additionally, there are proposals to review the legal framework for rental housing, joint housing ownership, land tenure and expropriations. Governments plan to reduce their participation in housing finance to a minimum, while maintaining their influence on the market through appropriate regulations. Other proposals for supporting the development of housing markets include ensuring the availability of materials, technology and credit, and encouraging household savings for mortgages etc.

In their plans of action, many countries propose to rehabilitate urban infrastructure through the involvement of the private sector by ensuring that there is adequate cost-recovery. Some countries propose to give responsibilities for the provision of infrastructure and basic services to local authorities. Improvement of water supply and water treatment is recommended in many reports. The use of sustainable energy and modern energy-saving technologies will be promoted and the efficiency of heat supply systems will be improved. Most countries indicate that maintenance and improvement of existing public transportation systems is a priority. Many plan to improve the ecological situation in industrial areas and in the largest cities. Many countries also acknowledge that their legal frameworks for disaster mitigation need to be improved.

Apart from new construction, many countries in Central and Eastern Europe emphasise the importance of rehabilitating old housing stock. Restoration of historical buildings and promotion of traditional architecture are often mentioned.

Before the transition period, urban planning was controlled by the central Government, but is now the responsibility of the local authorities, and a new legal framework for urban planning has been established or is under preparation. Urban policies will be implemented through consultative processes involving key actors, and monitoring systems will ensure follow up.

Some countries lack a comprehensive strategy for regional planning and propose to address unbalanced regional development through the establishment of a network of medium and large towns and the strengthening of selected villages as rural centres. Safeguarding the rural environment is also highlighted.

The responsibility and autonomy of regional and local authorities will be increased to deal with land, finance, investment planning, urban management and housing. Some countries also intend to enhance financial resources through improved tax collection. Staff training and capacity-building programmes will improve the cost-efficiency of administration of human settlements.

Many countries in the former Communist bloc are adopting new housing policies which involve residents and the private sector © Ara Guler

Lublin's Local Initiative Programme

by Grzegorz Wójcikowski

Short of funds, local governments are looking for new ways to pay for the cost of supplying basic urban infrastructure. Not surprisingly, they are turning to the taxpayer.

What is remarkable, however, is that a new kind of partnership is emerging between these traditional foes. True, the taxpayer still pays the bills. But, in return, however, receives a powerful voice in the implementation of their new road, sewer system or water supply.

The Local Initiative Programme in Lublin, Poland, illustrates just such an approach to urban renewal.

Coming Home

Prefabricated concrete blocks of flats were to replace small houses with gardens in Kominek, a 19th century neighbourhood in Lublin, Poland.

Mr. Radzisław Kasprzak, owner of one of the houses in Sosnowa Street, used to believe in those apartment blocks. In the 1970s, they promised conveniences people only dreamed about: central heating, hot running water, and a sewerage system. Everyday reality consisted of a coal-fired stove, a well for drawing water and an open sewer running the length of the street.

"My dad broke ground on this plot of land in 1955," recalls Kasprzak. "'We shall build a house,'" he said. My dad was a bricklayer and in fact he built the house himself.

"Fifteen years later they told us not to put any money into the house, since we would not be allowed to stay on the land for too long. And time stopped for our neighbourhood. Many people, like me, opened accounts in building cooperatives to start saving money for a flat, and waited. I still have this account."

The people's dreams were not fulfilled for over twenty years. In the meantime they, like their houses, have grown much older. Many live on meager pensions which are just enough to make ends meet. They claim that if the local authorities had issued them permits to expand and upgrade their properties, life would be much easier now.

While no one can give them back the time they spent waiting, they believe they can still try to catch up.

"At a meeting held in a community centre we made a decision to be the first to give it a try," explains Kasprzak. "That was two years ago. Out of 47 properties located in the street, 24 owners agreed to take part in the sewerage system construction project. The City authorities, pursuant to a resolution of the local council, covered three quarters of the cost involved. We set out to work and the sewerage system is already in place and operational.

"Last year we followed the same procedure to install the infrastructure for a gas system. The infrastructure is in place. In the spring we will pay for being connected. This year, City Hall promised to contribute towards the cost of street resurfacing. Collecting the money we need will be far from easy; people here are poor. But we will pull it off. We have to".

Grzegorz Wójcikowski is involved in the Local Initiative Programme in Lublin, Poland.
Translated by Marek Albigowski

WESTERN EUROPE and NORTH AMERICA

The following summary is based on a Habitat II Conference document (A/CONF.165/CRP.5) which highlights the main findings of over 100 National Reports and National Plans of Action submitted to UNCHS (Habitat) — the secretariat for the Conference — in 1995 and 1996.

In many countries in Western Europe and North America, a fairly high percentage of the population is elderly and population growth rates are slow. The level of urbanization varies between 55 per cent to 85 per cent. GNPs in the region are fairly high. In the context of budgetary restrictions, most countries with a developed social welfare system are now experiencing financial difficulties in maintaining it. The recent recession has left most economies constrained by high rates of unemployment (averaging 10 to 13 per cent).

Housing policies are based on the combined principles of the market economy and public-sector intervention which plays the major role in the provision of social housing. Although there are no housing shortages and there is a widespread recognition of the right to housing, affordable housing for low-income groups and the homeless is still a problem. Inadequate policies for the integration of immigrants and other disadvantaged groups have led to social tensions in several countries. The problem of homelessness needs to be addressed by reactivating the whole housing chain by supporting access to home ownership for middle-income groups so as to free public rental housing for very low-income households.

Integrated social-development programmes are being extended in marginalized urban areas to reduce the risks of social fracture and to counteract economic, ethnic and social segregation, with positive discrimination mechanisms, extended partnerships, reinforcement of services, education, social links, public participation and security, promoting socially diverse neighbourhoods, attracting and developing economic activities, housing and urban rehabilitation. Forms of new local justice and policies coordinated by municipalities have been established to address the need for new forms of social regulation. Networking between experts and the local authorities is important for the exchange of experiences.

Employment creation is a major stated priority, but with the exception of the United Kingdom, little progress has been made. Unemployment reduction plans aim at improving economic competitiveness, supporting enterprises and job creation, and addressing poverty traps that keep people out of work. In some countries locally-crafted solutions and the private sector are seen as the key to the economic success of cities. The role of central governments is to support these efforts.

A public housing estate in England: Housing policies in Europe often combine the market economy with public sector intervention/© Richard Strittmatter

In the less-developed countries of Western Europe, emphasis is placed on the improvement of city planning mechanisms, provision of water, and the rehabilitation of infrastructure and services. Easy access to transportation infrastructure is a key factor in urban transformation; settlements will be limited to areas where this infrastructure is already in place so as to reduce urban sprawl. Less-developed countries focus on improving their control on unauthorized land development. Several reports address the curb of decreasing populations in rural areas.

Several countries in Western Europe and North America have implemented strict environmental legislation affecting urban planning, but global policies which simultaneously address economic development, social solidarity and environment at the metropolitan level are not fully developed. Most countries propose to reduce their emissions into the soil, water and air, and to improve their monitoring system. They propose to protect historical and cultural heritage through the promotion of partnerships and the use of regulatory measures, interventions and financial incentives.

In many countries, large metropolitan areas do not benefit from adequate administration. In most countries, local authorities are responsible for the implementation of housing and urban policies. The trend is to increase their responsibility through continuous decentralization, and coordination and partnerships with central government. However, local initiatives need to respond to national priorities and the central government's involvement is essential to promote national unity and innovation and to arbitrate between contradictory local interests and contradictory values. Many countries intend to promote the participation of women in elected and professional bodies.

Some Governments indicated in their reports that they will pay increased attention to urban development in their bilateral cooperation. Priority issues in international cooperation are poverty reduction, the feminization of poverty, capacity-building and decentralization, environmental protection, encouraging democratic governance, enabling housing strategies and the empowerment of women. There is some concern, however, about the coordination between bilateral agencies, international agencies and NGOs.

Leicester: The Energy-Saving City

Leicester City Council has embarked on a programme of mass consultation to draw up a blueprint for the city's future development and improved quality of life. Progress has already been made with improvements in the city's energy efficiency, in partnership with the private and voluntary sectors.

At the beginning of 1994, Leicester City Council and a local charity, Environ, began consulting residents and organizations to seek agreement over the city's future. The "Blueprint for Leicester' process was launched. Publicity in October 1994 invited everyone to be involved in planning improvements to the city's quality of life.

The Council's magazine, distributed to all households in Leicester, has been used to disseminate information and the local press have run a whole series of articles about the campaign.

Some 800 people responded to a short questionnaire, sent out through local papers. And a representative sample of a further 800 people in eight electoral wards of the city completed a detailed analysis of how they view the city changing in the future.

The Home Energy Strategy is a practical example of how the blue-print approach is making real changes in Leicester residents' quality of life. The strategy aims to enable every household in the city to take steps to make their homes more energy-efficient and healthier as an environment. Reductions in pollution are then achieved, as the market for less wasteful products and services declines. Manufacturers have meanwhile helped to ensure that energy-efficient equipment is available in Leicester.

The Home Energy Strategy has been widely endorsed as an example of a best practice in the United Kingdom and abroad. City Council officers have presented the strategy at a Department of the Environment (DoE) conference on energy efficiency in housing investment programmes. And the German Ministry for Urban Development has sponsored the council and Leicester housing association to address an international sustainability conference.

Outside interests have focused on a number of important changes to policies and practices in the city since the Energy Strategy's launch.

These include:

- A new National Home Energy Rating target standard of at least nine for new housing association and council homes in Leicester;
- Excess electricity produced by the combined heat and power scheme on three council housing estates is being sold to the energy utilities. The revenue generated is used to fund further energy efficiency improvements in vacant council homes;
- Home starter packs for all new council tenants include instructions on using their heating systems efficiently and general tips on energy saving;
- Energy advice training is provided for council officers and other organizations' staff that make home visits. Tenant representatives and local builders are also trained, so advice is available quickly and locally;
- An energy saving manual is given to all council housing managers. Energy awareness has been incorporated into job descriptions;

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- A housing partnership fund has been established between the Department of the Environment (DoE), the council and owner occupiers to secure home energy efficiency grants.

All households which have benefitted from grant aided schemes are surveyed on their satisfaction with the resulting levels of comfort, warmth and fuel savings. Energy conservation has in effect been the first stage of the city's Blueprint process. The views from the wider public consultation were encapsulated in a draft Blueprint document in the summer of 1995.

During this consultation period, public events identified areas for action where there was wide agreement, and areas still to be resolved. A final Blueprint is now being produced and action plans relating to areas other than energy conservation will flow from this.

The Project at a Glance

Energy conservation initiatives pose a dilemma for city authorities. The question is how they can involve local residents, businesses and industry in the process. By addressing the future of the city as a whole, with wide consultation on a blueprint to improve the local quality of life, Leicester City Council has drawn the community into its energy saving initiative.

Engagement: Every resident and business in Leicester has been invited to participate in drawing up plans to develop the city. This is a more open approach to strategic planning usually conducted by "experts" and senior local officials and politicians.

Sustainability: City-wide energy conservation measures have already led to major reductions in carbon dioxide emissions and domestic fuel consumption.

Equity: Local government decision making is often seen as being dominated by vested interests. Leicester addresses this by targeting groups usually under-represented in consultation processes: the elderly, youth, the disabled, businesses, ethnic communities, the unemployed and low paid, women and trade unions.

The above article is reproduced from "Living in the Future: 24 Sustainable Ideas from the UK" (1996), published by the UK National Council for Habitat II.

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FORUM

UN Reform: Towards a World Charter of Local Self-Government

by Norbert Burger

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"It is clear that the world of the 21st century will be predominantly urban and the transition to global sustainability will largely depend on the success in ensuring the sustainable development of our cities and towns." This quotation from paragraph 172 of United Nations Secretary General Kofi Annan's review report on UN reform[1] unveiled in July could be echoed by Mayors, councillors and city officials from all over the world. Little wonder, then, if they are puzzled and disappointed that the high level of recognition given by the UN at the Istanbul Summit to urban problems and their solutions sometimes seems to be dissipating in diplomatic inertia rather than being translated into new and relevant partnership programmes on the ground.

The news is of course not all bad for cities and local authorities. The moves towards democratic decentralisation in many countries, the recognition by increasing numbers of governments (local as well as national) that participatory methods of planning and decision-making produce good results, the acceptance that diversity — of structures, of cultures, of approaches to problems — is a source of strength to be celebrated and built upon, these are all positive signs for the future.

The Habitat Agenda, adopted in Istanbul after intensive intergovernmental negotiations, charts a whole series of measures which are essential if the problems of poverty, housing stress, environmental degradation, traffic chaos, social exclusion etc. prevalent in so many of our cities and urban areas are to be tackled effectively. The international local government associations, coordinating their activities through WACLAC (World Associations of Cities and Local Authorities Coordination), are all too frequently surprised — and saddened — that commitments negotiated so laboriously and declared so publicly at the UN appear to be forgotten or set aside so lightly when Governments return to their countries.

One of WACLAC's prime functions is to keep reminding Governments of the commitments they made in Istanbul and to see that these are fulfilled. One of the ways we should have of doing this is through our official participation in relevant UN bodies. We are therefore very disappointed that the Commission on Human Settlements decided in May 1997 not to respond positively to the General Assembly's request to review its working methods in order to involve in its work the representatives of local authorities or international associations of local authorities. (General Assembly Resolution 51/177 of 16 December 1996.) Worse still, the Commission did not even agree to provide for the participation rights which we had enjoyed — and used responsibly — throughout the Habitat II process, incorporated in the famous rule 61 in Istanbul.[2]

We accept that the refusal to contemplate a widening of the Commission's membership can be explained partly by the unwillingness of national Governments to agree to a change which could have constitutional implications for the rest of the UN and its reform, and also partly by their preoccupation with problems over the running of UNCHS (Habitat) which seemed to place its future in some doubt. But the resolute opposition of certain Governments to even modest representative participation on behalf of cities and local authorities in UN work on problems for which they have direct responsibility is simply incomprehensible to our members.

There have, however, been a few positive developments during this year. In April 1997 the Commission on Sustainable Development session adopted the good practice of official hearings with the major sectors, including local government, which had been initiated by Committee 2 in Istanbul. And the General Assembly Special Rio+5 Session in June 1997 allowed one speaker from local government — my colleague Collin Matjila, Chairman of the Greater Johannesburg Metropolitan Council — to make a presentation (after a dozen or so NGO speakers) highlighting the fact that more than 70 countries are engaged in formal processes of decentralisation and pointing out how some 2,000 local authorities in 64 countries are already engaged in implementing the challenging participatory Local Agenda 21 process called for in Rio.

Of course, we know that many national Governments are still wary of extending local governments powers, for fear of weakening national unity or even in case of mistakes being made — as if they could not make these themselves, only on a larger, monolithic scale! This is why WACLAC is actively pursuing the call made at the World Assembly of Cities and Local Authorities in Istanbul last year for a World Charter of Local Self-Government to be drawn up for promulgation by the UN as an international standard for democratic decentralisation.

WACLAC has recently signed a Memorandum of Understanding with UNCHS (Habitat) setting out a clear procedure for pursuing various aspects of the Habitat II follow-up in close partnership, and joint work on the World Charter will be an important element in

this. We envisage building upon the successful experience of the European Charter of Local Self-Government, which was launched as a Council of Europe Convention in 1985 and is now ratified by 22 countries, and plan to carry out a series of regional consultations to distill the core elements and values which should be promulgated on a global basis. Other areas of our joint work with Habitat will include partnership in the further development of the Best Practices and Local Leadership Programme, and in formulating forward policies for the Urban Management Programme, the Sustainable Cities Programme, and other on-the-ground initiatives.

By means such as these we believe that we can help to maximise the effectiveness and the impact of the UN's already significant investment in local capacity-building, which is surely set to grow in order to meet the vital sustainability targets. I had the honour of leading a WACLAC delegation to meet the UN Secretary-General on 30 July to emphasise these points in the context of his UN reform package, which alas says almost nothing in the chapter on civil society about building the partnership with local government. One of the ideas we have suggested is the formation of an inter-agency UN Local Government Liaison Service to operate alongside and in close liaison with the Enterprise Liaison Service recommended in his report.

While our prime policy focus is upon effective action on the ground, an essential component of this is to achieve a proper level of acceptance in the international community of local governments' role and contribution as the part of the fabric of governance which is closest to the people. To this end, WACLAC has made a submission to the Economic and Social Council seeking recognition as an Intergovernmental Organisation. We are also building on our working links with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), in following up the important Mayors Colloquium on Governance for Sustainable Growth and Equity which it staged in New York in July 1997, and we wish to develop joint projects with all the other UN Agencies whose programmes are to contribute to the fulfilment of the Istanbul commitments.

The implementation of the Habitat Agenda must not be allowed to fall victim to internal problems and rivalries within the UN. It is not for us to take sides in these organisational issues, but it is our clear duty to remind all concerned that urgent, coordinated and concrete international action is essential to meet urgent human needs. Our message is clear: First, let the cities be given sufficient powers to enable them to address their people's problems responsibly, in partnership with the national governments and all stakeholders, showing that they have a rich pool of ideas and imagination of their own as well as the will to do the best for their people, to whom they are the closest and most accessible form of government.

And second, let the cities show that, by working together across national boundaries and with the UN in a rich variety of partnerships and networks, they can quickly achieve pragmatic forms of cooperation to meet the immediate needs of their people which would take years of traditional diplomatic negotiation.

Norbert Burger, Mayor of Cologne, Germany, was President of the World Associations of Cities and Local Authorities Coordination (WACLAC) from April 1997 to September 1997. (The new President of WACLAC, beginning October 1997, is Daby Diagne, President of Louga Region, Senegal, and President of the United Towns Organization.)

References

1. "Renewing the United Nations: A Programme for Reform: Report of the Secretary-General", 14 July 1997.

2. Rule 61 of the Rules of Procedure for Habitat II states: "Representatives of local authorities, designated by accredited international associations of local authorities in consultation with national associations of local authorities invited to the conference, may participate, without the right to vote, in the deliberations of the Conference, its Main Committees and, as appropriate, any other committee or working group, on questions within the scope of their activities."

Localizing the Habitat Agenda

by Jean-Pierre Elong Mbassi

There is an awful tendency within United Nations circles to feel that when a long and detailed negotiation finally reaches its end, the task has been completed. This can rarely be so, and in the case of the Habitat Agenda the work was only just beginning when the delegations left Istanbul.

I have been invited by the Editor to write about localizing the Habitat Agenda, but in truth this agenda was always essentially local. Habitat II — the "City Summit" — rightly stressed the vital need for partnership in addressing the problems of urbanization — partnership between the various levels of government, and between each of these and the major groups such as NGOs, business, professionals, trade unions, and academia. In truth, the way forward lies much more in enabling local energy, initiative and enlightened self-interest to be fostered and released by improving the quality and capacity of governance in our towns and cities through these partnerships, and by spreading the use of well-tried practices and good comparative information.

The problems addressed in the Habitat Agenda are the day-to-day problems of humanity, which are perceived first and foremost in the places where people live and work, and shouldered most directly by the leaders of these communities. Of course, not all of them can be resolved at the local level alone. Some are the result of global problems which must be faced collectively by the international community, such as the scourge of international conflicts, the inequalities of terms of trade, or the explosion of motor traffic. Others are related to the practices of international businesses, whose policy decisions affecting local environments or employment levels may be taken in distant places. Yet others arise from the actions of international agencies which, in addressing the situation in one sector or area, may create new burdens in another.

The bulk of local problems are not, however, of this order. They relate much more to the distribution of resources and of responsibilities within the state, to the organization of governance within the national framework.

Even where resources are scarce, many can be resolved through partnership efforts based on mutual respect and shared objectives.

A striking feature of the last ten years has been the upsurge of democracy with its accompanying commitment to decentralization. Though built sometimes on rather fragile foundations, this decentralization trend has opened up a whole new vista for local participation and local management, and has aroused expectations which are felt, and to a large extent expressed, by the local authorities.

In response to these developments the local authorities have been building up their representative national associations, to provide mutual support and exchange of experience but also more particularly to conduct a policy dialogue with national governments. This dialogue is aimed at defining measures which will enable the local authorities to operate effectively on their own initiative, rather than being confined within strict and inflexible regulations and codes or tortuous prior approval procedures.

And in view of the international dimensions discussed earlier, local authorities have also looked increasingly to their regional and international associations to speak up for local democracy in the policy debate within the UN and elsewhere, an expectation which was encouraged and facilitated throughout the Habitat II process.

National Governments said in the Istanbul Declaration (paragraph 12): *"Recognizing local authorities as our closest partners, and as essential, in the implementation of the Habitat Agenda, we must, within the legal framework of each country, promote decentralization through democratic local authorities and work to strengthen their financial and institutional capacities in accordance with the conditions of countries, while ensuring their transparency, accountability and responsiveness to the needs of people, which are key requirements for Governments at all levels."*

Under the Memorandum of Understanding which we recently signed with UNCHS (Habitat), WACLAC will be playing an active part in monitoring the implementation of this undertaking and the associated commitments. We are at one with UNCHS (Habitat) in seeing national Habitat committees and national Habitat plans as key elements in moving the participatory processes of planning and management of human settlements forward. These instruments should provide the means of identifying and removing blockages to progress and of stimulating alliances between the various sectors.

Some governments, including those of some cities, will tend to look at national committees and national plans with a jaundiced eye. Some of those set up to assemble the national input to Habitat II were, frankly, uninspiring and should not be maintained in their previous form. But, with the commitments made in Istanbul and the resolute action already being taken in some countries to put them into practice, the situation has changed and the challenge is now much more clearly defined. The power of example should be a potent weapon in enabling the partners to work out ways forward which are appropriate to the circumstances of each country but which embody the universal values promulgated so clearly at Istanbul.

It has been suggested that, at the local level too, Habitat plans and committees should be set up. This is an area in which action really has to be tailored to local circumstances. Since the management of the local habitat — the provision of adequate shelter for all and sustainable human settlements development — is the primary business of any local authority, there could be an air of artificiality about introducing a new and separate strand of Habitat-labelled activity. On the other hand, the experience of over 2,000 Local Agenda 21 processes — proof if one were needed that local authorities are key actors in promulgating and delivering UN commitments — shows that the concept of participatory, inclusive planning involving partner sectors in a real sense, can transform traditional ways of doing things. In some cases, totally new plans may result. In others, existing planning obligations should be looked at afresh and delivered in new ways.

Individual city leaders are unlikely to regard the Habitat Agenda as a practical guide to fulfilling their day-to-day management responsibilities. They will, however, value and expect to see delivered the commitments made by their national governments towards decentralization, local empowerment, and capacity-building, and they will look to their representatives in the national Habitat Committees to take action to ensure that the Istanbul momentum is maintained.

They will also look increasingly to the international community to fulfil the promises which it made in Istanbul regarding its own programmes. Many local authorities have already discovered the mutual benefits to be gained from working in partnership on shared concerns across national boundaries. Many more have profited from the international exchanges of ideas, experience and expertise facilitated by their international associations and latterly by UN Agencies such as Habitat. Decentralized cooperation and peer group exchanges need to be built progressively into official development aid programmes. And urban-oriented programmes such as those run or supported by UNCHS, UNDP and the World Bank need to incorporate these practices systematically, as an integral part of the process of securing for them the higher priority they deserve in an urbanizing world.

As the coordinating global voice of the local government community, WACLAC will be focusing its attention upon the formulation of forward-looking policies for these various international programmes and feeding in the experience of the cities and local authorities in the implementation of the Habitat Agenda in their national contexts.

The Habitat Agenda does not need to be localized — it already is. But it does need to be implemented with full commitment and energy by all levels of government and by all the partners in their own appropriate ways. The well-being of the urban population, soon to be over half of humanity, and in fact of us all, depends upon it.

Jean-Pierre Elong Mbassi is the Secretary General of the World Associations of Cities and Local Authorities Coordination (WACLAC).

The above article is based on the "Guide for Local Authorities", currently being prepared by UNCHS (Habitat) in collaboration with WACLAC.

PARTNERS UPDATE

Global Parliamentarians on Habitat: Regional Activities

Africa

The Regional Council for the African Continent of the Global Parliamentarians on Habitat was incorporated during the Council's meeting in May 1997, held in Nairobi parallel to the 16th session of the Commission on Human Settlements. The meeting was attended by 40 parliamentarians from 15 African countries. UNCHS (Habitat) is currently working with the Regional Council to help them prepare for the Second Global Forum of Parliamentarians on Habitat, which will take place in Cancun, Mexico, in January 1998 (see below).

America

The Regional Council of the Global Parliamentarians on Habitat for the American Continent held its Regional Meeting from 7 to 9 April 1997 in Montevideo, Uruguay, during which 80 parliamentarians from 17 countries of the American continent attended. After the incorporation of the Regional Council for the American Continent, efforts are being made to incorporate national parliamentary groups in order to strengthen the active participation of parliamentarians.

Asia

A Regional Meeting of Parliamentarians on Habitat from the Asian Continent was held in Fukuoka, Japan in August 1997, which coincided with the opening of Habitat's office in Fukuoka.

Europe

The First Regional Meeting of Parliamentarians on Habitat for the European Continent, will be held from 3 to 5 November 1997 in Bonn, Germany.

Second Global Forum, Cancun, Mexico

The Second Global Forum of Parliamentarians on Habitat will be held in Cancun, Mexico, from 27 to 30 January 1998. More than 400 parliamentarians from all over the world are expected to attend.

By focusing on monitoring and guiding changes in legislation and public policy to conform to the Habitat Agenda, and by organizing their efforts at the regional, as well as the global level, the Global Parliamentarians on Habitat have defined a strategic role for themselves in implementing the Habitat Agenda. The Second Global Forum of Parliamentarians on Habitat, therefore, promises to be a major milestone in organizing parliamentarians worldwide in the process of implementing the Habitat Agenda.

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Creating Better Cities with Children

Workshop Series on Participatory Process for Developing Strategies for Urban Change

According to the Convention on the Rights of the Child, Agenda 21 of the Earth Summit, and the Habitat Agenda, children and youth are a major group who must be engaged in planning and caring for the places where they live; yet there remains a great gap between rhetoric about young people's participation and their marginalization in urban development practice. To bridge words and action, the Averroes Foundation of the Netherlands is offering a series of three workshops that will lead teams of core people from different cities through a one-year process of planning and implementing projects to engage children and youth in creating more healthy, secure, and enabling urban environments. The workshops will be conducted by regional leaders of Growing Up in Cities, a contemporary international action-research project, in cooperation with the MOST Programme of UNESCO. Participating city teams should be composed of two or three individuals who will take responsibility for their city's project implementation and management. Team members may include: municipal officials, development advisors, urban planners, architects, environmental educators, NGO professionals, community organizers, child researchers, and other child advocates.

Workshop schedule:
26-29 November 1997
April 1998
November 1998

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Huairou Commission Launches African Women's Initiative

By Bertrade B. Mbom

Created in 1995 during the Fourth World Conference on Women by the Secretary-General of Habitat II, the Huairou Commission (HC) was instrumental in placing gender issues and women's leadership at the centre of the Habitat II Conference in Istanbul. The Commission has since been functioning as an advisory body to UNCHS (Habitat)'s Executive Director on matters related to women in human settlements as well as overseeing that the local, national and international commitments to women are realized in the implementation of the Habitat Agenda.

The HC is committed working with grassroots women towards the sustainability of their living and working environments and communities. Composed of women's non-governmental and community-based organizations, women in governments at all levels, professional institutions, the private sector, development agencies and the UN system, the Huairou Commission seeks to maintain a vital line of communication between women working at the grassroots levels and the policy making bodies of UNCHS.

During the 16th session of the Commission on Human Settlements, held in Nairobi, Kenya from 27 April to 8 May 1997, the Huairou Commission launched its African Women's Initiative (AWI) that fits directly with the Habitat Special Programme for Africa.

Sustainable human development requires the participation of all elements of civil society. Yet women in general and African women in particular, have historically been excluded from equitable access to resources and from participation in decision-making in human settlements. It is against this backdrop that AWI was launched with a view to addressing issues specifically pertaining to African women in human settlement development.

The first meeting of AWI was held at UNDP Headquarters in New York on 18 June 1997 and was chaired by Ms. Ruth B. Engo of the UN Office of the Special Coordinator for Africa and Least Developed Countries (UN/OSCAL). Attending the meeting were many members of the Huairou Commission, including representatives of the Super Coalition of Women, Homes and Community, DAWN, UNIFEM, UNDP, UNCHS Women and Human Settlement Division, Habitat's Community Development Programme, the Urban Management Programme, the Green Belt Movement of Kenya and the Community Development Programme in Ghana. A useful cross-agency representation indeed, and also very nicely "engendered": three male counterparts amongst us!

Ms. Engo gave an insightful introduction into the rationale behind the two major UN initiatives on Africa: the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa (UN-NADAF) and the United Nations System-wide Special Initiative on Africa (UNSIA); a system-wide effort to focus on Africa as the world's foremost development challenge, and to demonstrate the will and commitment of the entire UN system to a revitalised collaboration in support of the development of the continent and its people. This coordinated political and financial mobilisation effort of the UN system is expected to galvanize the international donor community to support a Global Development Agenda, with Africa as the primary focus.

The backgrounder was very useful in clarifying the context of Habitat's Special Programme for Africa in general, and AWI in particular, with the Habitat Agenda mandate covering vast areas of the UNSIA. HSPA closely fits within this framework in enhancing shelter and adequate housing and improvement of overall living conditions, capacity-building, employment and income generating opportunities for Africa's people. So does AWI in its mission to support African women in human settlements development, both as beneficiaries and agents of change.

Bertrade B. Mbom is Chair of the African Women's Initiative Task Force.
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The Partners Update column is intended for all partners who wish to share information on their activities and achievements, particularly in relation to implementation of the Habitat Agenda. If you would like to contribute to this column, please send your submission to:

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Habitat News

Habitat Opens Regional Office in Fukuoka, Japan

The opening of the UNCHS (Habitat) Fukuoka Office in the City of Fukuoka in Japan is in line with resolution 16/25 of the UN Commission on Human Settlements which requests for the establishment of the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements in the Asia and Pacific region.

UNCHS (Habitat)'s mandate is two-fold, global as well as national. The former requires a strong and cohesive headquarters, able to run the multifaceted work programme that the complexity of human settlements demands; it also implies the ability to reach out to national communities to translate into tangible field operations, the global knowledge generated through thematic research. In this context, decentralisation is seen as a means of strengthening the regional presence of the Centre as it assists national and local governments through the execution of field programmes and projects.

The role envisaged for the Fukuoka Office is multifaceted and reflects the mandate given to UNCHS (Habitat). The functions of the Office will be limited to the Asia-Pacific region, but will have strong linkages to both the global programme of work of UNCHS (Habitat) and with particular programmes and projects of other UNCHS regional offices in areas of common interest. In addition to operational activities, the functions of the Office will include research, training and information dissemination. Thus, the Office will play an important role in the effective implementation of the outcome of the United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II).

The office will also have representational responsibilities, and work closely with Habitat partners (local authorities, NGOs and private sector, women's groups, Parliamentarians, youth, academies of sciences and research institutions as well as the media).

The office is operational as of 1 August 1997. The appointed head of Habitat Fukuoka Office is Mr. Ignacio Armillas who has been the Coordinator of the Asia Pacific Unit at Habitat's Technical Cooperation Division (TCD). The other members of the UNCHS Fukuoka team are: Mr. Desa Weerapana, Mr. Hank Verbeak, Mr. Jan Meeuwissen and Mr. Madhab Mathema.

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Mayors Compare Notes on Common City Problems and Their Solutions

Almost 150 mayors gathered to attend the Colloquium of Mayors which took place within the UNDP-organised International Conference on Governance for Sustainable Growth and Equity in New York, from 28 to 29 July 1997. The Colloquium, a follow-up to the Habitat II Conference, was opened by the then Assistant Secretary-General and head of UNCHS (Habitat), and was the largest meeting of mayors ever to take place at the United Nations headquarters in New York. The mayors met to compare notes on common urban problems and to share innovative solutions, and focused on ways to maximise the roles of cities in the global economy.

UMP Panel on Good Urban Governance

During the Conference, the Urban Management Programme (UMP) conducted a Special Panel on "The Experience of Cities in Introducing New Approaches to Improved Governance". The panel concentrated on the role of city consultations, and on how this tool had been used by different cities from the four regions where UMP is operating.

Presentations were made by the Mayor of Dakar, the Head of Planning of Amman, the Mayor of Montinlupa (Philippines) and the Mayor of Porto Alegre (Brazil). Although a number of partners commented that there was as yet no consensus on the term "governance", all had employed the city consultation technique in some way or another in order to draw stakeholders into the governance process. Two of the presenters mentioned the importance of UMP in clarifying and promoting the new governance agenda at the city level. UMP has proposed its own definition of good urban governance as *"the participatory exercise of authority to manage urban affairs"*.

The increasing democratisation of management of cities was a central theme, although the speakers emphasised different ways of achieving this. The Mayor of Montinlupa stressed the role of community training in helping poor groups leverage their involvement, whereas the Mayor of Porto Alegre concentrated on his city's involvement of the community in formulating a participatory budget.

Comments from the four touched on the shortcomings of the representation principle at local government level and the need to counterbalance these through a consultation process.

All speakers commented on how a participatory governance process could help in restoring faith in government, at least at the local level, and that there was a strong link to improving services. Citizens are more willing to pay local authority taxes and charges if they have actively contributed to the formulation of programmes.

WACLAC Formalises Working Relationship with Habitat

On 29 July 1997, the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat) and the World Association of Cities and Local Authorities Coordination (WACLAC) signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to formalise their working relations and to set future directions for joint cooperation.

WACLAC is the structure set up by the main international and regional associations of local authorities to project a united voice to the United Nations; Habitat is the coordinating agency within the UN system responsible for human settlements activities and is focal point for the implementation of the Habitat Agenda — the global plan of action adopted at the second United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II) last year.

WACLAC and Habitat have agreed to consolidate and promote their partnership through, among other things, obtaining formal recognition and inclusion of WACLAC in the work of relevant United Nations Commissions and Committees, most notably the Commissions on Human Settlements and Sustainable Development. The two parties further agreed to facilitate the effective participation of local authorities in the implementation, monitoring and assessment of the Habitat Agenda through Habitat's programmes and projects, such as the Global Urban Observatory.

The MoU was signed in New York by the Assistant Secretary-General and head of Habitat and the President of WACLAC and Mayor of Cologne, Germany.

Habitat Scroll of Honour Recipients 1997

Each year, World Habitat Day, held on the first Monday in October, provides an opportunity for reflection on the living conditions of human beings everywhere, and for action to address the shortcomings of these conditions. The theme this year was "Future Cities" and the global observance held in Bonn, Germany.

Among the highlights of the celebrations was the presentation of the Habitat Scroll of Honour to seven individuals and projects whose contribution to improving the living conditions of people has been outstanding. The recipients of this year's Scroll of Honour are:

Senator Oscar Lopez Velarde Vega of Mexico

for his outstanding contribution to legal and regulatory reforms in the field of settlements development and for international action with parliamentarians world-wide in responding to the challenge of rapid urbanization.

Mother Centre, Stuttgart-West, Germany

for promoting sustainable community development, social cohesion, the empowerment of grassroots women and neighbourhood networks;

South African Homeless People's Federation

for pioneering women's central participation in savings and loans and for mobilizing the urban poor on overall settlement planning, finance, training and construction;

Mayor Huang Ziqiang, China

for his outstanding role in the sustainable development and management of human settlements in Zhongshan Municipality;

Reinhard Goethert and Nabeel Hamdi

for their outstanding contribution to the development of innovative methodologies, training and field practice in Community Action Planning; and

Federation of Canadian Municipalities

for mobilizing elected officials and staff from Canadian municipalities for the development of local communities and for providing support to sister municipalities in developing countries.

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More information on UNCHS (Habitat) activities can be found on the Website: <http://www.unhabitat.org>

iKusasa Conference: Habitat and FIG Agree to Develop Joint Programmes

Opening Ceremony. (From left to right) Mr. D. Button, Conference chairman; His worship the Mayor of Durban, Mr. Obed Mlaba; Mr. David Whaley, United Nations Resident Representative; Mr. Cedric Savage, Chairman, Board of Directors, NGS; Professor Peter Dale, President, FIG

The iKusasa Consas 97 conference was held in Durban, South Africa, from 24 to 28 August 1997. It was attended by over 800 delegates from a wide range of surveying and land-related backgrounds, including developers, planners, valuers, state, provincial and local authorities, NGOs, civil engineers, sub-contractors, suppliers, bankers, researchers and development consultants.

The theme of the conference was "Surveying Tomorrow's Opportunities". A major sub-theme was informal settlements and security of tenure addressing a range of issues such as services, infrastructure and housing, land management and local governance, spatial planning and land information management. Delegates attended from over 30 countries including many African nations but also including Australia, Brazil, Canada, Malaysia, the United Kingdom, the USA, the Nordic countries, and Eastern Europe.

UNCHS (Habitat) contributed to the Conference by presenting the Habitat Agenda recommendations, especially on land- and property- related issues, bringing expertise in regularisation and upgrading of informal settlements, local governance and land management, security of tenure, and access to land and housing. Parallel sessions dealt with such matters such as geographic information systems, cadastre and land management, and spatial planning.

The International Federation of Surveyors (FIG) was a co-organizer of the Conference. Professor Peter Dale, FIG Chairperson, traced the way forward in his opening speech on "Land Tenure and Cadastral Reform: New Opportunities, New Challenges". He suggested a model for the future cadastre as a comprehensive tool for integrating data on the ownership, value and use of the land in support of sustainable development.

As an outcome of the Conference, FIG and UNCHS (Habitat) signed a concluding statement in support of iKusasa-Consas 97 whereby they agreed to continue developing a joint programme of activities in support of the implementation of the Habitat Agenda and National Plans of Action.

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Publications

Cities Fit for People

Edited by Üner Kirdar
Published by United Nations, New York, 1997.

This remarkable book assembles the thinking of 46 distinguished national and international policy-makers, academics, urbanists, leaders of public and private enterprises and the media, who examine the impact of urbanization on the lives of people. Prominent personalities in the field of human development, including Kofi Annan, Nancy Barry, Ali Mazrui, Wally N'Dow, David Satterthwaite and Jorge Wilheim offer ideas and suggestions on how to make our cities fit for people. They provide realistic policy options and practical advice on what each of us — in our communities and in our homes — can do to make our habitats more livable. The book argues that cities must become the sources of positive visions of people — visions in which all people have a safe, healthy and sustainable environment. It looks at the new challenges facing citizens of cities: poverty, unemployment, inequality, alienation and questions related to urban governance.

Cities Fit for People, which grew out of ideas presented at the Habitat II Conference, is a collaborative work which will make a lasting and valuable intellectual contribution to the new social contract for building a more humane and more sustainable world for the new millennium. The book will serve as a useful guide to policy-makers, economists, political and social scientists, urbanists and students of international affairs.

Sustainability, the Environment and Urbanization

Edited by Cedric Pugh
Published by Earthscan Publications Ltd., London, 1996.

The 1992 Rio Summit and subsequent literature and debate has focused on "green" issues such as biodiversity, climate change and marine pollution. Much less has been written about the "brown" agenda: factors such as poor sanitation and water quality, air pollution and housing problems, which are particularly prevalent in developing countries.

Although the Habitat II Conference brought the "brown" agenda into focus,

much still remains to be done in terms of making these issues central to the overall development agenda.

This book provides a comprehensive overview of the "brown" agenda, with case studies and examples from a number of Southern countries. It looks at the broad economic context behind the problems and covers the conceptual issues of sustainability, infrastructure and health programmes, as well as assessing environmental appraisal methods.

Clearly written with contributions from some of the leading experts in the field, the book will appeal to students of environmental and development courses, researchers and all those involved in the "healthy cities" movement.

Women Constructing Their Lives

Published by UNCHS (Habitat), Nairobi, 1997. (HS/442/97E)

The Women in Human Settlements Development Programme at UNCHS (Habitat) regularly receives requests to support women's projects in the construction sector. The case studies presented in this volume are meant to evaluate the effectiveness of such projects. Is construction a sector in which women can gain income and independence? Is it worth the effort for women to venture into a sector that is so much associated with men and male values? If so, how can women enter the construction sector, or are the obstacles to entering such a male bastion too large to overcome?

The four case studies in this volume — from Ghana, India, Jamaica and Mexico — describe how women, both trained and untrained, have participated in the Construction sector with varying degrees of success and personal fulfillment. They describe the obstacles: from lack of access to training, to unequal pay and harassment on construction sites. Habitat in general, and the Women in Human Settlements Development Programme in particular, will use the findings from these studies to determine what form the Centre's support to women in the construction sector will take. This volume is presented to a wider readership in the hope that it will be of use to those planning construction projects and/or involved in increasing and improving women's skills in the shelter sector.

Directory of Non-Governmental Organizations in OECD Countries

Published by OECD, Paris, 1997, in collaboration with UNCHS (Habitat), GRET and NGLS.

In a unique and collaborative effort, four organizations — the Development Centre of the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), the Research and Technology Exchange Group (GRET), the United Nations Non-governmental Liaison Service (NGLS) and the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat) — have worked together for the first time to compile their data on NGOs active in the fields of habitat and urban development. The result is a directory of 1,777 NGOs based in 28 OECD Member countries.

Recognizing the urgent need to tackle problems of urban poverty, rapid urban development and habitat in developing countries, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) from OECD Member countries have recently made considerable efforts in the habitat and urban development sector. In a series of OECD Development Centre publications on the development activities of NGOs based in OECD Member countries, this comprehensive directory serves as a guide for development practitioners and planners, as well as those interested in habitat issues. Each NGO profile describes the organization's aims, its structure, its related educational work in OECD countries and its activities in developing regions. Cross-referenced indexes facilitate access to information on "who is doing what and where" in the field of habitat and urban development.

At a time when some policy makers in the development community are once again speaking of "development fatigue", the information contained in this directory offers evidence of a vibrant civil society committed to meeting the challenges of international solidarity.

OECD Directory cover price for individuals US$85

Available from OECD Publications
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The Urban Opportunity: The Work of NGOs in the Cities of the South

Edited by Nicholas Hall, Rob Hart and Diana Miltin.
Published by Intermediate Technology Publications, Ltd., London, 1996.

This book describes the work of ten Northern NGOs who are responding to the urban opportunities in the South: building partnerships to support local organizations that are tackling urban problems, and helping to bring local views to bear on officials who may have the power to improve things.

A stimulating variety of experiences, in a wide range of contexts, is described in the book, and what emerges from the numerous case studies is the strength and diversity of local people's responses to problems which are often not of their own making. The proliferation of articulate and well-informed local organizations opens up new possibilities for international dialogue, both South-North and South-South.

VIDEOS

UNCHS (Habitat) announces the availability of the following recently-released videos for use by the Broadcast Media, NGOs, UN agencies and the general public.

These videos have been produced by UNCHS (Habitat) in order to encourage greater awareness about the urban agenda. Some emphasize the problems of the coming urban millennium, others suggest suitable solutions. All of them motivate the viewer to participate in improving our habitat.

These videos are available in Betacam PAL and VHS PAL or NTSC format. These tapes are available for a small fee of $50 for the Betacam copies, and $20 for the VHS copies. This money is to cover copying and postage costs. Should you require more than one programme, please note that savings can be made if you choose to copy the programmes on one tape in which case you need only send $20.

Also note that most of the productions are in English. However, you are welcome to request copies in other languages. If we can provide these we will, failing which we would be willing to provide copies with a separated track in order to allow recipients to make their own language versions.

To order, and for a full catalogue of all UNCHS videos, please write to:

The Head,
Audio-Visual Section,
IAVD, UNCHS (Habitat),
P O Box 300030,
Nairobi, Kenya.
E-mail: videos@unchs.org
Internet:
http://www.unon.org/unon/unchs/videos/1997cat/

Homo Urbanus: Habitat II & Beyond (1997)

29 minutes

For the first time in history, over 50 per cent of human beings live in towns and cities. We are becoming a predominantly urban species. In keeping with this, the UN Conference on Human Settlements, Habitat II was held in Istanbul in June 1996 to celebrate the birth of a new human species: Homo Urbanus. This video is a visual celebration of the Conference. It shows the relevance of this event to the average citizen and explains the importance of the Habitat Agenda for the future of our cities. Through interviews and footage of projects around the world, the video shows how partnership between the government, local authorities, the private sector, NGOs and the community can help improve our cities.

Given a Voice ....: Poor Urban Children in Accra (1996)

12 minutes

In the fast growing cities of Africa such as Accra, more and more children are living on the streets. They are poor and neglected. They live under unhealthy and even dangerous conditions. But these children also represent the future of these cities. No effort should be spared to provide and care for these children, to listen to their voices, to use their creativity and to enable them to participate in the community. Urban renewal is not possible without taking into account the needs and concerns of the poor children of our cities.

Growing Smart: Children on the Streets of Our Cities (1997)

12 minutes

The problem of street children in our cities is growing everyday. In the city centre and slums of Nairobi, already approximately 40,000 children roam the streets. Extremely poor and shunned by society, these children live an extremely harsh and depressing life. How do they survive? How can they manage? The film follows gangs of street children in Nairobi. The film then looks at a number of projects by NGOs aimed at helping these children. It ends by arguing that such help needs to be coordinated and organised if the children are to benefit.

Walk the Talk: Women Walking Beyond Habitat II (1997)

13.5 minutes

The Women's Caucus was a major actor in the 1996 UN Conference on Human Settlements, (Habitat II). This programme shows the active participation of women in the conference. It describes their efforts to ensure that the Habitat Agenda included a gender perspective.

A Flight of Flamingoes (1996)

15 minutes

The flamingoes of the world famous Lake Nakuru in Kenya could be under threat. Unless the urban expansion of Nakuru is designed carefully, it could threaten the animals in the neighbouring national park. As part of its Localising Agenda 21 Initiative, UNCHS(Habitat) is working with the Municipality of Nakuru to ensure ecologically sustainable plans for urban development.

A Vision for Essaouira (1996)

16 minutes

The grand hopes for an ecologically sustainable future comes down to the micro-management polices of local authorities. To help Localise Agenda 21, UNCHS(Habitat) is working with the local authority of Essaouira, a small seaside resort in Morocco. This partnership has lead to projects to preserve an ancient medina. It has also helped preserve a neighbouring wetland in the region which is a breeding site for a rare type of Heron.

CEMIS Indonesia: Community-Based Environmental Management Information System (1996)

12 minutes

This video is about the application of a Community-based Environmental Management Information System in two low-income areas of Jakarta, Kali Baru and Kali Anyar. The film describes how a community is empowered to improve and manage their living environment by following a sequence of CEMIS modules. It is available in English and in Indonesian.

Cities in Common (1997)

15 minutes

The world urgently needs to reduce its unsustainable consumption patterns. In particular it is the argument of this programme that with over 50 per cent of humanity now living in urban areas, cities are a good focal point for intervention to help make the world ecologically efficient. In fact, it is argued that by concentrating on cities and their policies, we might overcome the present impasse in the dialogue, or lack thereof, on consumption patterns.

Calendar of Events

6 October 1997
World Habitat Day
Global Observance celebrations
Bonn, Germany
Organizer: UNCHS

6-8 October 1997
Urban Environment Forum
Shanghai, China
Organizers/Sponsors: UNCHS/UNEP/ACCA 21 and the State Science and Technology Commission of China

29-30 October 1997
The Habitat Agenda and the City
Rio de Janeiro, Brazil
Organizers: UNCHS/Municipality of Rio

5-11 November 1997
Fifth Asian and Pacific Ministerial Conference on Social Development
Manila, Philippines
Organizer: Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP)

6-9 November 1997
Livable Cities for All: A Latin American perspective
Lima, Peru
Organizer: ARC.PEACE Peru and International ARC.PEACE Colegio de Arquitectos del Peru

9-13 November 1997
International Forum on Urban Poverty
Florence, Italy
Organizer: UNCHS and the Municipality of Florence

14-16 November 1997
CENTURY XXI OPTIONS
Calcutta, India
Organizer: Centre for Built Environment

8-10 December 1997
International Consultations on Partnership in the Water Sector for Cities in Africa
Cape Town, South Africa
Organizers: UNCHS (Habitat)/UNDP/The Water Utility Partnership for Capacity Building in Africa

12-14 December 1997
Urban Rivers and Waterfronts
Calcutta, India
Organizer: Centre for Built Environment

16-18 January 1998
Disasters: Cities & Buildings
Organizer: Centre for Built Environment

27-30 January 1998
Second Global Forum of Parliamentarians on Habitat
Cancun, Mexico
Organizer: Global Parliamentarians on Habitat

6-8 February 1998
Cities and Cybernatics: Cyber Futures in Cities
Calcutta, India
Organizer: Centre for Built Environment

26-28 February 1998
International Symposium on City, Space, and Globalization
Michigan
Organizer: College of Architecture and Urban Planning, University of Michigan

4-6 March 1998
International Conference on Quality of Life in Cities
Singapore
Organizer: School of Building and Estate Management of the National University of Singapore

30 March - 3 April 1998
Shelter and Revitalization of Old and Historic Urban Centres
Havana, Cuba
Organizer: TRIALOG Vereinigung zur wissenschaftlichen Erforschung des Planens und Bauens in der Dritten Welt

23-25 April 1998
International Forum II on Architectural Education for the 3rd Millennium
North Cyprus
Organizer: Faculty of Architecture, Eastern Mediterranean University (EMU) and Faculty of Architecture, Istanbul Technical University (ITU)

26-29 May 1998
World Conference on International Cooperation of Cities and Citizens
Tokyo, Japan
Organizer: United Nations and Tokyo Metropolitan Government

6-10 July 1998
1st World Congress of Health and Urban Environment
Madrid, Spain
Organizer: Technical Secretariat: TILESA OPC, S.L

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